

2d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 075 March 2012

Interview

Clint Cearley

Articles

Sketchbook of
Tyson Murphy

The Gallery

Heidi Muranen, Sasha
Gorec, plus more!

IT'S BEHIND YOU!

Stepping out of the shadows and straight onto this month's 2DArtist cover is **Carlos Cabrera's** stunning yet spine tingling mythological Hidebehind creature.

Designing Droids

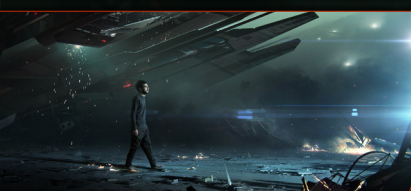
Alexander Iglesias is back in this month's issue and talks us through how to design and paint a cool Repair Droid.

Illustrating Fairy Tales

Blaz Porenta concludes this fantastic series with his eery take on the fairy tale classic, Hansel and Gretel.

Dreamscape

In our brand new series, **Jama Jurabaev** shows us the processes he and his team used to create this brilliant short movie.





Editorial

Hello and welcome to the March issue of 2DArtist. Here in the UK, we are beginning to see the first signs of spring! The sun is starting to peep through the clouds and the once brown and dreary looking trees are turning green again and coming to life. If this can't put a smile on your face I'm sure our new issue of 2DArtist will do the trick!

There are so many great tutorials in this month's magazine that it is hard to know where to start the editorial, but we will begin by turning our attention to the stunning cover image by **Carlos Cabrera**. I hope that you are enjoying watching how two artists tackle the same brief. It is fascinating to see how some features are similar and other are totally different, and in this magazine we see more of the different than the similar. **Simon Dominic** and **Carlos Cabrera** look at the creepy creature called a hidebehind in this issue and cover design, compositional and painting techniques as they talk us through the creation of their brilliant images.

On the subject of creepy, we say goodbye to **Blaz Porenta's** excellent Illustrating Fairy Tales series with a chapter covering how he brought the story of Hansel and Gretel to life. We're really grateful for all of the hard work Blaz has put into creating his amazing images and look forward to working with him again in the future. Stay tuned for our brand new series, coming in April, where we look at creating Manga version of classic historic leaders, including the great Genghis Khan and Egyptian queen, Cleopatra.

In last month's issue we kicked off our new Droids series, and in this issue we continue by looking at how to design and paint a Recon Droid. **Alexander Iglesias** is back again and talks us through his love of droids and mechs, as well as demonstrating his approach to dealing with this amazing subject matter.

Our new series this month is a little different to what you might be used to in our magazine. **Jama Jurabaev** is a regular contributor to 2DArtist, but in his four part series he will be demonstrating something new by showing us how to create amazing animations using paintings, live-action footage and compositing techniques. I strongly recommend that you take a look at the video in his tutorial to see the amazing results you can achieve using this technique.

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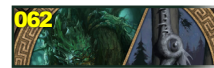
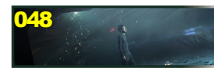
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Also in this issue we feature another Making Of by the amazingly talented **Markus Lovadina**, an interview with the excellent artist **Clint Cearley** and a sketchbook that gives us an insight into the creative mind of **Tyson Murphy**. As if this wasn't enough, we've also got a top-notch gallery featuring work by **Levente Patterfy**, **Andrei Pervukhin**, **Francesco Corvino** and many more talented artists.



Gallery Image - Scout by Andrei Pervukhin



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If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!



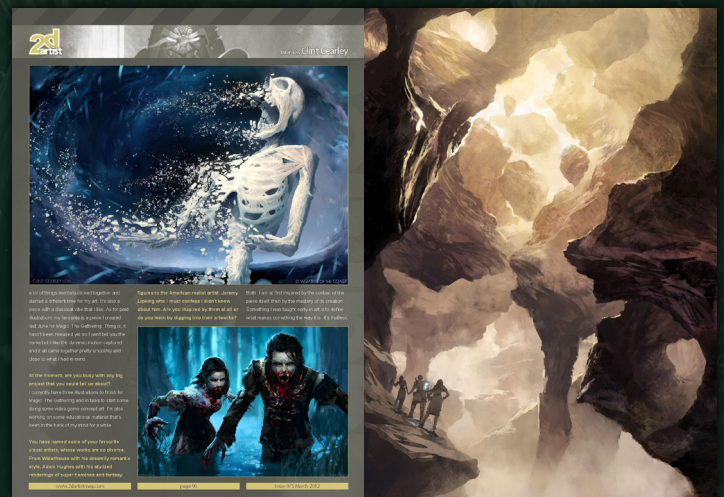
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3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.



Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com

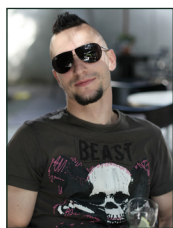


Clint Cearley

Clint enjoys living out his childhood ambition of getting paid to draw cool fantasy stuff. Trained in traditional media most of his work is now digital though the sketchbook is never far or forgotten. He's primarily inspired from other artists such as the classical pencil work of Alan Lee to the powerful concept work of Kekai Kotaki.

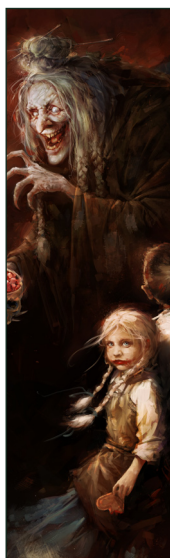


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Blaz Porenta

As a child Blaz read thousands of fairy tales. Today he tells them himself but instead of writing them, he paints them. Blaz likes to create a snapshot of his world for viewers, and let them create their own story.



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Carlos Cabrera

Carlos Cabrera is a freelance concept artist and illustrator from Argentina. He has worked on several AAA video games such as F.E.A.R., Section 8, Ghost Recon and Aliens Colonial Marines and films like Black Swan. In his free time he does free videos tutorials for his website to help other artists get started.



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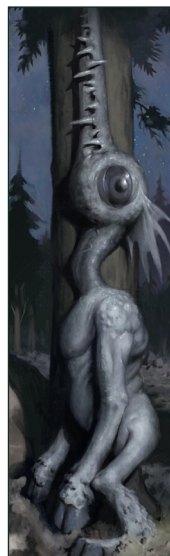


Jama Jurabaev

After Jama's graduation as an aerospace engineer in 2004 he never thought that his life will be related with digital art. But now he is working as a concept artist, and digital art has totally consumed his life.

He has done a lot of illustrations for advertising agencies but now is searching for serious projects in the game or film industry.

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Simon Dominic

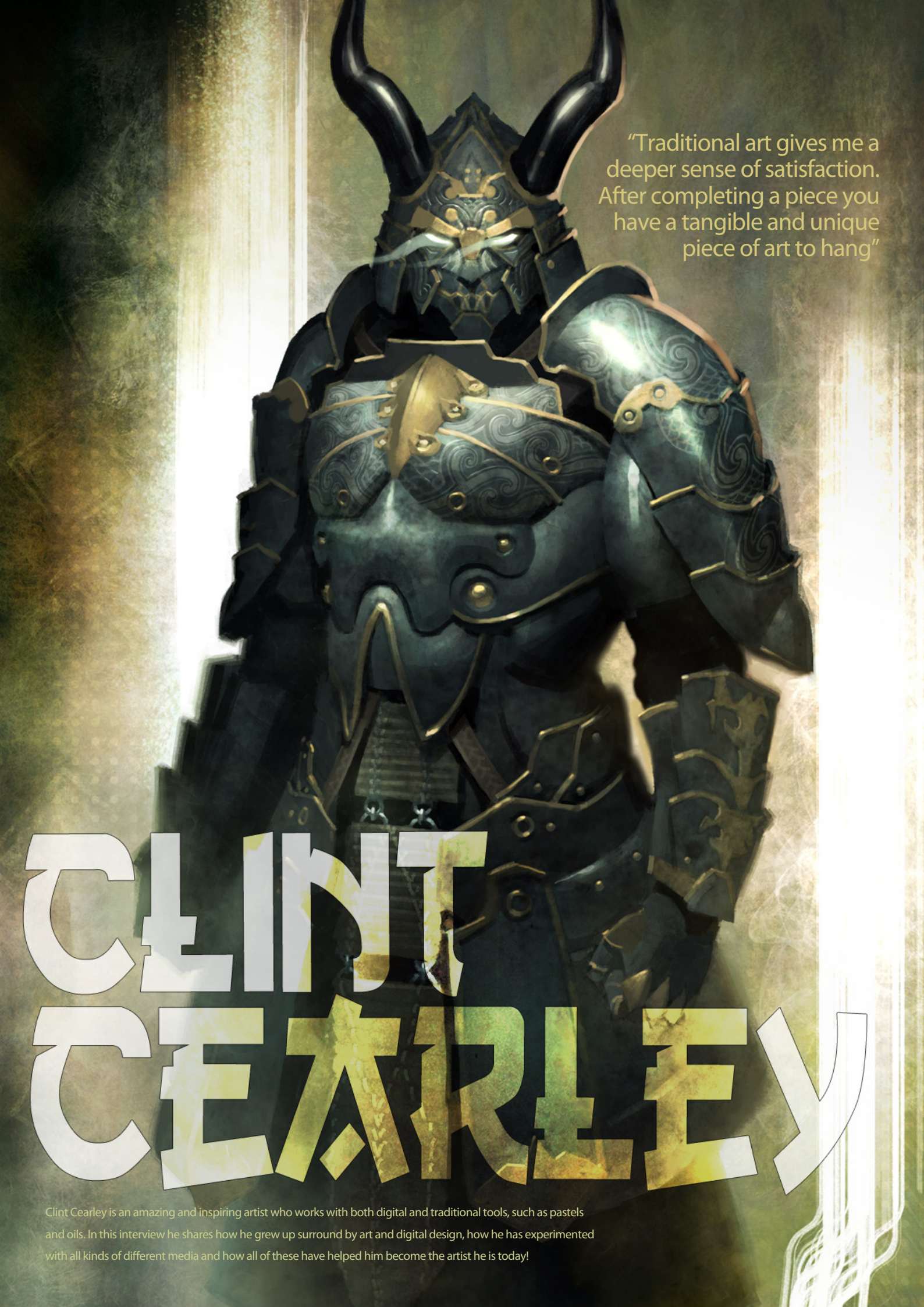
Simon is a freelance illustrator specializing in fantasy, sci-fi, horror and the generally bizarre. He paints digitally, applying traditional techniques through use of digital tools. He has worked on game art, book covers, editorial and magazine workshops since going pro in 2009.



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"Traditional art gives me a deeper sense of satisfaction. After completing a piece you have a tangible and unique piece of art to hang"

CLINT CEARLEY

Clint Cearley is an amazing and inspiring artist who works with both digital and traditional tools, such as pastels and oils. In this interview he shares how he grew up surround by art and digital design, how he has experimented with all kinds of different media and how all of these have helped him become the artist he is today!

"I'm an example of what happens to one of those kids who draws a lot if they just never bother stopping." Could you tell us what you mean by this quote?

Most people remember some kid in school who was always doodling. A lot of us did this as kids, but most grow out of it, with other activities taking its place. But not with me. If you never stop doodling you'll eventually become someone like me; an illustrator, fashion designer, concept artist or the like. So, if you're really good at coloring in the lines as a kid, one day someone will pay you to do it.

"Digital art is great for allowing me to explore and express ideas faster and with less timidity for making mistakes"

Well, obviously all those doodles have had a great impact on your life. When did you start your career as an illustrator? Have you ever worked for big companies or you have always been a freelancer?

My start in commercial art was with portraiture when I was 17. I worked in pastels and oils, and continued that for two years before taking a job as a graphic designer. For the next seven



years I remained in design before making the transition to illustration. I have always worked freelance though I would consider a job position if the situation was right.

You have an amazingly versatile portfolio – browsing through it kept me quite busy for a while! I love your traditional art as much as your digital. Which of the two is closest to your heart and gives you more satisfaction as an illustrator?

Traditional art gives me a deeper sense of satisfaction. After completing a piece you have a tangible and unique piece of art to hang. There is no Ctrl + Z, so the art is a visual record of its own creation, which I find interesting. Digital art is great for allowing me to explore and express ideas more quickly, without having to worry about making mistakes. Digital art also makes for a better learning tool for artistic understanding, but to me will always be a little impersonal.



I totally agree with you. While looking at your profile, I noticed you do some photography as well. Do you do it for your own references or does it play a more serious role in what you are doing as an artist?

My photography is primarily limited to creating pose reference photos and travel photography. I do appreciate good photography and have read enough to understand the workings of a camera, but have spent little time in serious study of it.

“As a score must adapt from scene to scene and movie to movie, so must the colorist style change to match the inked work”

You have worked on a good number of comic books and have made a great colorist portfolio; how do you find it to work on somebody else's drawing? Does that limit

you in any way? What do you like about it?

A great thing about colorist work is that the bulk of carrying the project is not on my shoulders. The colors are the movie's score to the penciler and inker's actors in front of the camera. The colors exist to accent the art, but not overpower it. Much of the work is determined ahead of time by the artwork, which can be both good and bad as you're not required to "reinvent the wheel" but you're also constrained more than you would sometimes want. As a score must adapt from scene to scene and movie to movie, so must the colorist style change to match the inked work; smooth, cartoonish rendering must be handled much differently than a grungy ink style.

From all the projects and illustrations you have done, which one is your favorite and which did you enjoyed most?

While it was a personal piece, *The Naiads* would be my favorite. It was on that piece that a lot of things mentally clicked together and it



Clint Cearley.com

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kick-started a different time for my art. It's also a piece with a classical vibe that I like. As for paid illustrations, my favorite is a piece I created last June for *Magic: The Gathering*. Thing is, it hasn't been released yet so I can't tell you the name, but I like the dynamic motion captured and it all came together pretty smoothly and was close to what I had in mind.

At the moment, are you busy with any big projects that you could tell us about?

I currently have three illustrations to finish for *Magic: The Gathering* and I'm in talks to start some doing some video game concept art. I'm also working on some educational material that's been in the back of my mind for a while.

You have named some of your favorite visual artists, whose works are so diverse. From Waterhouse with his dreamily romantic style to Adam Hughes, with his stylized renderings of super heroines and fantasy figures, and the American realist artist,

Jeremy Lipking who I must confess I hadn't heard of before. Are you inspired by them at all or do you learn by digging into their artworks?

Both. I am at first inspired by the context of the piece itself, then by the mastery of its creation. Something I was taught early in art is to define what makes something the way it is. It's fruitless









to simply say a piece is "great." Define what specifically makes that impression and you can understand it, and by understanding you can apply it in your own work. So yes, I constantly analyze their artwork, and learn their ways of thinking and techniques, all the while being inspired by the beauty of the work itself.

Could you talk about your creation process? What else inspires you?

After receiving a brief on a project the first thing I do is grab my moleskin sketchbook and work out composition thumbnails. I will also explore variations of the character design and any other pertinent design piece. Then it's time to switch to Photoshop and sketch a larger version of the concept, and with the rough design in place, I'll browse a folder of inspirational genre artwork and reference photos for ideas relevant to what I'm doing. Looking at references or inspiration pieces before my design is set has a tendency to box my mind into the frames of what I'm seeing so this way they serve to expound my work and not restrict it.

"Be smart and learn from others' efforts by reading instructional art books, and getting input in forums or from teachers."



I'll take cues from the reference images to add bits of authenticity to the image, and cues from other inspirational artwork as to the rendering and level I want to achieve.

Do you have any tips for new and upcoming artists who would like to improve their skills on drawing and painting?

The slowest way to improve is going at it without constructive input. Don't make it a pride or laziness issue – be smart and learn from others' efforts by reading instructional art books, and

getting input in forums or from teachers. This can save you a lot of wasted time and help you become aware of blind spots in your work. As knowledge is only as useful as it is used, I encourage you to constantly keep at it and you'll see results.

What is your next big plan for the future? Any ambitious ideas or projects you would love to get involved in?

I would like to move fields a bit and do more work in the film and game concept art area. To that end, the name Weta Workshop comes to mind. I love everything that's come out of there. Also I'm considering work in mainstream comics and I'd like to somehow find time to get back to the easel and work up a series of paintings I've been thinking of for a while. There are also some fairly ambitious plans for developing educational tools and services that aren't currently available.

Thanks very much for taking time out to do this interview!

Clint Cearley

For more information please visit:

<http://damascus5.deviantart.com/gallery/>

Or contact them at:

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Interview by: Layla Khani







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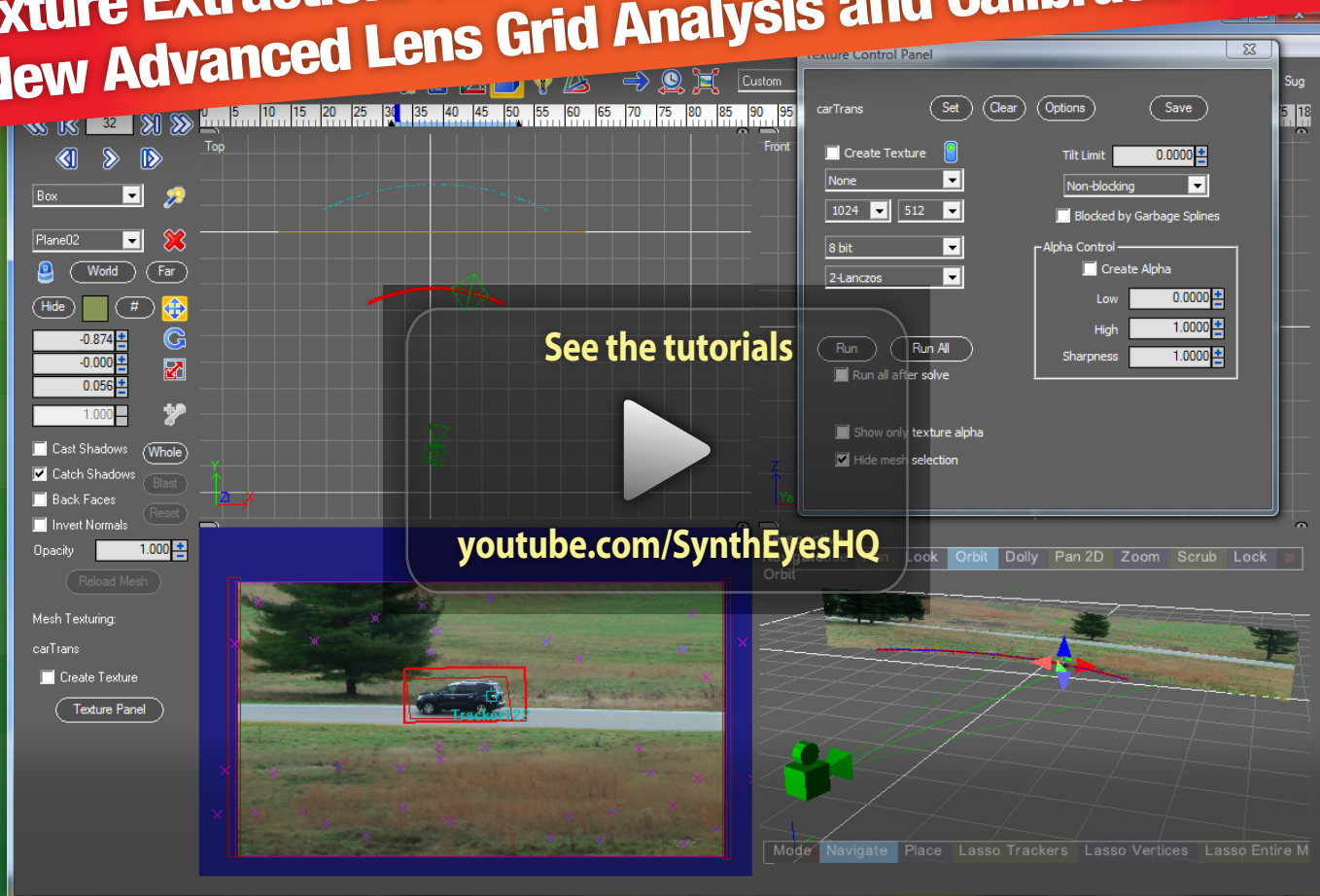
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"I'll admit I get quite a few strange looks as a grown man drawing weird stuff when I probably shouldn't be"



SKETCHBOOK

Of Tyson Murphy

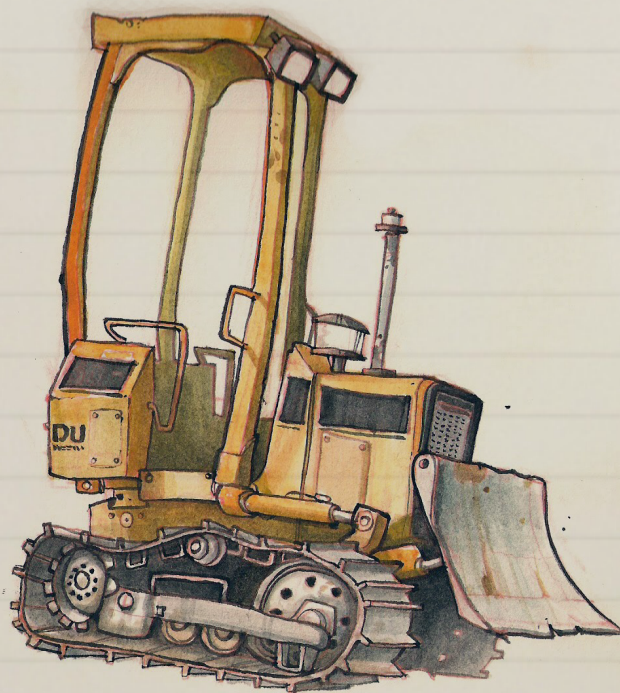
This month's sketchbook showcases Tyson Murphy's incredible sketchbook work. He tells us how his doodles and caricatures were created, and where the inspiration to create them came from. With the use of different tools such as colored pencil, ink and watercolor, Tyson shows us how a sketch can sometimes be a refreshing change to a complete, finished image.



Sketchbook of Tyson Murphy

This is a digital sketch of a man who is very happy with his drink (**Fig.01**). I love trying to get my digital brushes to feel like traditional media, and the ones I used here came pretty close.

A little prop sketch based off a photo (**Fig.02**). I enjoyed doing the quick and wonky design, and then spending a bit of time on the watercolors.



01

02

I try to sketch everywhere I can. In this case I was at a local religious meeting. I'll admit I get quite a few strange looks as a grown man drawing weird stuff when I probably shouldn't be. It's important for me to try and push through the embarrassment though, so I can keep learning (Fig.03).

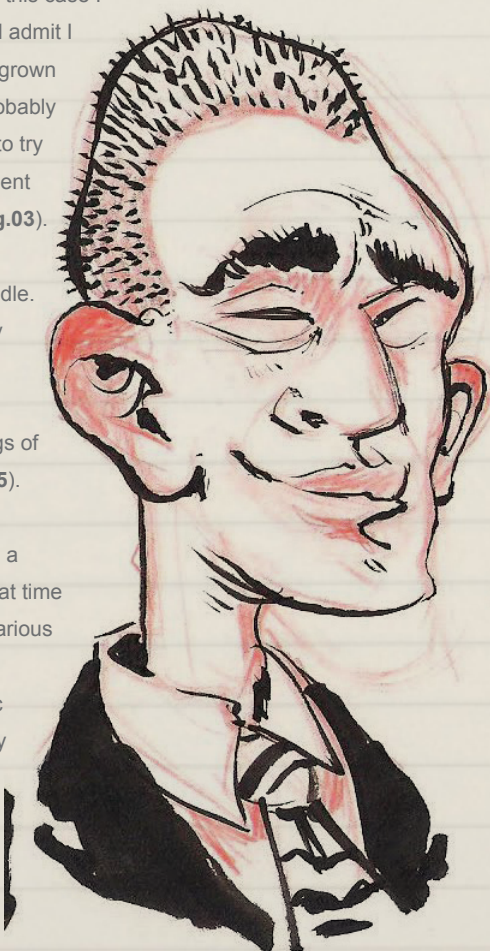
Fig.04 shows another random doodle. As long as a character has a goofy smile, I'll like it.

Here are a couple of small drawings of yet another weird character (Fig.05).

I went to Portugal for a film festival a couple of years ago and had a great time sitting outside and sketching the various participants. Very rarely will I draw someone in a realistic or academic style. If art isn't fun for me, then my work suffers greatly (Fig.06).

Fig.07 shows one of many, many sketches of one of my teachers in school. The best part of class was having lots of time to draw everyone around me!

Fig.08 shows a couple of caricatures from a movie I was watching. I like to pause movies every now and then and just draw what's on the screen. I don't recommend doing this if a group of friends is watching with you though!



03



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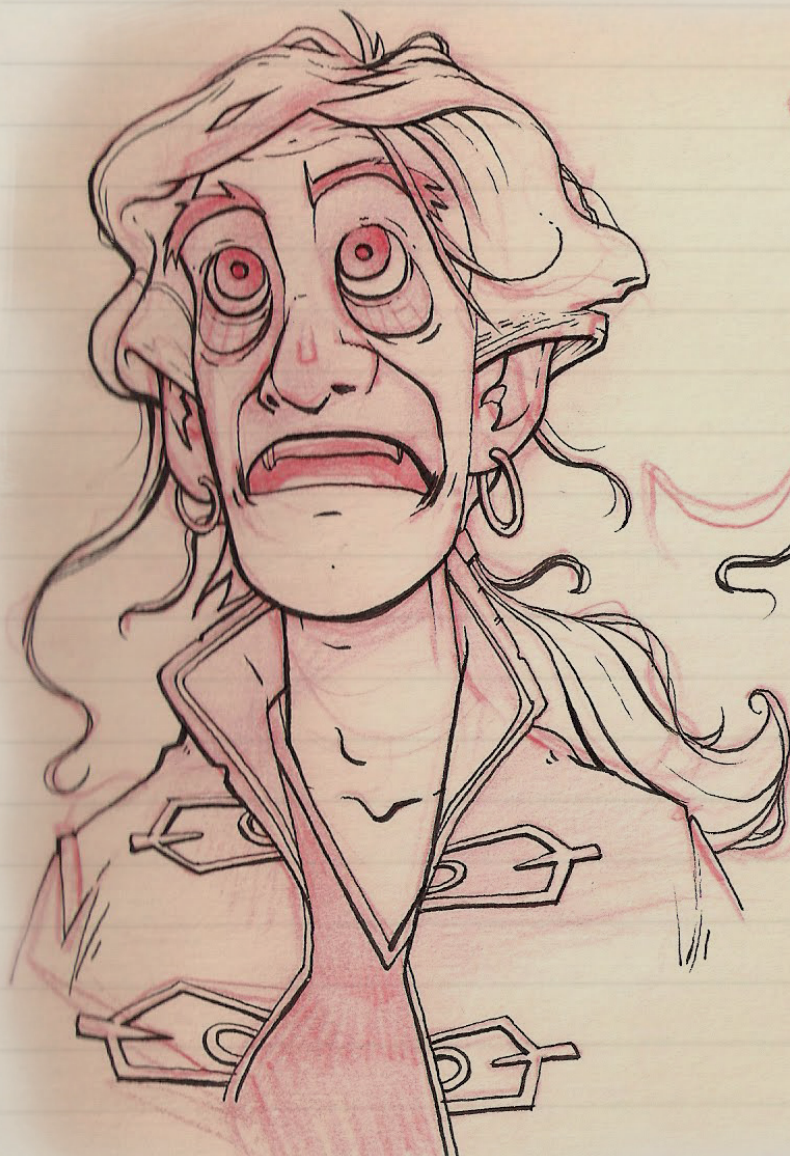
05



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08



Fig.09 is an image of a lady I saw walking in the mall. She was talking angrily on her phone, and that's probably why I made her look like a witch.

I often surf the internet for fairly random photos of people to draw. This is one of those sketches (Fig.10). It's a great way to keep busy without having to brave the dangerous outside world.

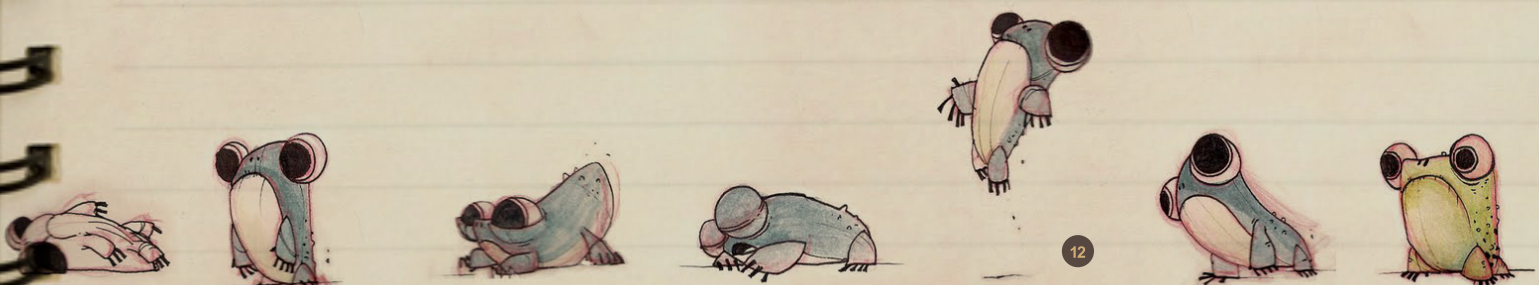


This little kid has an interesting imaginary friend; a soviet-era general (Fig.11).

In Fig.12 you can see a little collection of frogs that I doodle in my sketchbook quite often. When learning how to pose characters in an interesting way, I like to try it out on simple characters like this.



11



12



13

This strange man is a sort of prophet to bunnies everywhere. My general process for sketches like this is a rough colored pencil, followed by less-rough inking, following by a watercolor or ink wash (Fig.13).



It's refreshing for me to do sketches like this (Fig.14), with not a lot of thought put into the line quality, perspective or any of that. Just doodling and having fun!

I remember this sketch from when I was in a big slump, artistically. I got frustrated with myself and decided to just start drawing without thinking. The result is a little strange, but it really helped me release my mind and get back to having fun (Fig.15).

Tyson Murphy

For more information please visit:

<http://gardenturtle.blogspot.com/>

Or contact him at:

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Miroslav Petrov

Andrey Seleznev

Francesco Corvino

Gia Nguyen Hoang

Sasha Gorec

Ricardo Orellana

Jennifer Healy

Heidi Muranen

Andrei Pervukhin

THE GALLERY



Scout

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Archetype - Digital Matte Painting

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Dragon lands

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(Below)



Aztec Warrior

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Year of the Dragon

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Illustrating Fairy Tales



Chapter 5 - Hansel and Gretel

The ability to tell a story within your image is a real skill. There are so many things that need to be taken into consideration, the overall composition, what you do and don't put in the scene and how to portray the emotion of those in the scene. These are all things you must consider if you plan to lead the viewers gaze through the scene and make them understand the story behind it. In this series of tutorials illustration experts Simon Dominic Brewer and Blaz Porenta will be talking us through how to tell a story, using well known Fairy Tales which they will re-invent as the subject matter. This series could totally change the way you approach a digital painting.

Chapter 5: Hansel and Gretel

Software Used: Photoshop

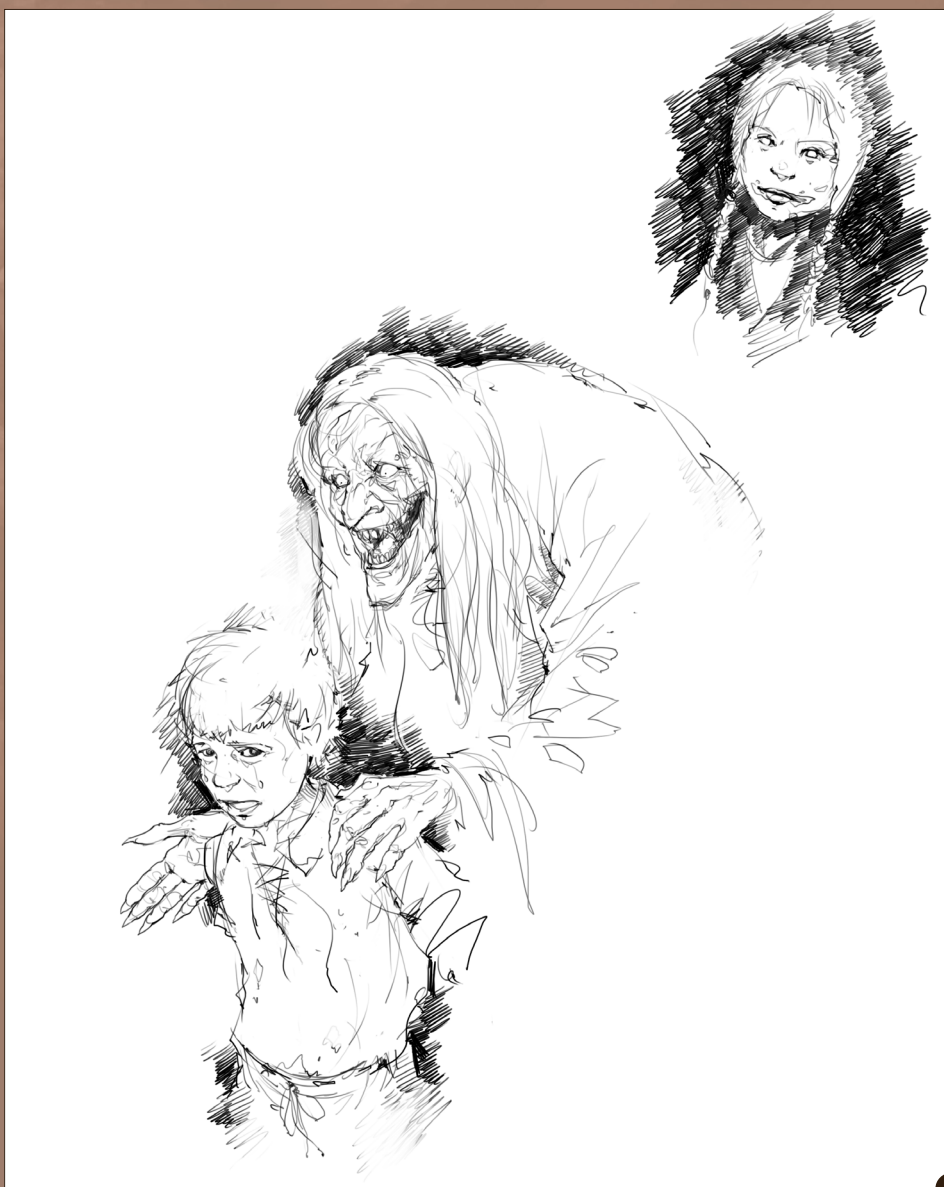
To be honest, to begin with I struggled with this image, especially in its early stages. I couldn't decide which part of the story to portray and what would work well with the darker, sinister twist. I had loads of different ideas, like a burning gingerbread house or Gretel pushing the old woman into the fire, then suddenly my final idea came to me! It is this final idea that I will explain in this tutorial.

After dismissing the first idea of a burning house I did a sketch of a witch walking little Hansel to his end with a ghost-like Gretel high in the background of the image (**Fig.01**). As with the Three Little Pigs tutorial, I started this painting with a line art, creating a rough composition of our main three characters. No other elements were sketched at this point as I was imagining a completely black background with one main light source coming from the left, being a fire in front of them (**Fig.02**).

It is sort of a chiaroscuro style of painting, which is similar to the way old masters like Caravaggio and Rembrandt painted. As in my previous tutorials, I started with a really quick grayscale image to establish basic tone values and contrasts. I added none of the fine detail at this point. Although I was originally happy with the composition of the line art, I started noticing some flaws as the image developed. The black in the background was too strong and the characters were almost randomly all over the place. It was time to make some changes.

To counter the faults I had found I moved Gretel more to the left and added an arch of light behind her to hint that they are in some sort of room. I also painted in some reds in the lower left corner to show that this is where the fire is and to hint at warmth in the image (**Fig.03**).

When painting over a grayscale image I usually use Color and Overlay layer modes in Photoshop. I use Color mode to add colors and Overlay to pop out contrasts and make colors more vivid. Although I was mainly working with



01



02



03



04

warm colors here, I never forgot to drop some colder hues in as well. By dropping in these cooler hues you make the oranges and reds next to them look more alive. Also by using contrasting warmths you can add to the story of an image. As I mentioned before, I wanted Gretel to look almost like a ghost as she was preparing to push the witch into the fire.

Although the image was progressing overall, I wasn't particularly happy with it. The composition was weak, mainly because all three characters were facing the same direction, leading the viewer's eye out of the image instead of making it circle around the painting. Because this wasn't working I decided to try a completely new composition and portray another part of the story with it. I decided to paint the moment where the children met the old lady for



05



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08



09

the first time so I could capture their response and uncertainty. Hansel's body posture is telling us he is surprised and terrified by the grin on the witch's face, while Gretel looks almost too calm and is facing away from the potential danger, leading us into the painting (Fig.04).

Now that I was satisfied I could move on to

details and defining the characters, their outfits and a final color scheme (Fig.05). This is another dangerous stage of painting where you can easily get stuck in one part of the image, which often means that the painting won't work as a whole. Work systematically and be patient. You will get to paint eyelashes and all those reflections eventually. Create the basic forms and figure out all the light sources. Always check the full size image and don't work on close-ups for too long. Once that is complete you can move on to the detail (Fig.06 - 11).



10



11

In my next step I widened the canvas a bit as I felt the characters looked a little trapped, and painted borders with loose and rough brush strokes to suggest there is something more behind the frame. I also put another yellow/orange layer in Overlay mode on top of the image, which is a simple but effective way of creating warm tones and uniting the main light source color (Fig.12). If there is too much white





13

in the painting the Overlay mode won't give you the result you are looking for. If that is the case darken the painting a bit. As my art teacher said, "There is no 100% black or white in the nature" and the same should be applied to paintings, otherwise it will look over-burned.

Although I planned to leave the background dark and almost black, I realized that with a hint of a wall behind the witch I didn't only get a better depth perception, but could also cast her shadow and get another composition element to play with (Fig.13).

The biscuits in the old lady's hand were replaced with a skull jar full of sweets (Fig.14),



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which adds a hint of danger and a really sinister twist to the witch. I also gave the girl a biscuit that looks like a bleeding heart, which could just be a cookie filled with strawberry jam. I also made it look like she has blood dripping from it and her mouth, which points forward to the horrible act she has to commit to survive.

In my final step I tightened everything up with details where they needed to be applied. I also added highlights to pop things out and placed some textures to add more life to the painting (Fig.15). I need to confess I also got carried away with the witch's face in these

final stages, so much so that she looked like she was wearing a mask (Fig.16 - 18). This demonstrates the importance of what I said before: always look at your paintings from a distance. The details are the least important element in the painting if the painting itself doesn't work well as a whole.

I hope you enjoyed my images as much as I enjoyed painting them. Once again a big thanks go to the 3DTotal team for this awesome opportunity to work on these well-known stories and for giving me the freedom to develop my own interpretations.

Blaz Porenta

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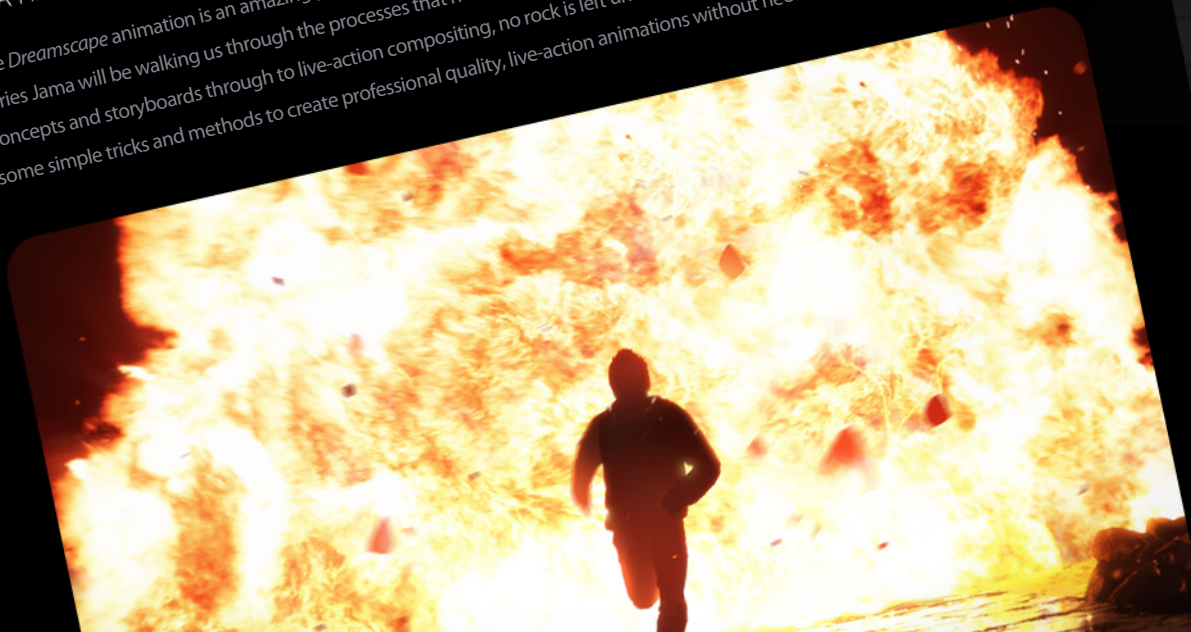


DREAMSCAPE



CREATING LIVE-ACTION ANIMATIONS. USING 2D PAINTINGS AND COMPOSITING TECHNIQUES

The *Dreamscape* animation is an amazing project led by regular 2DArtist magazine contributor, Jama Jurabaev. In this tutorial series Jama will be walking us through the processes that he and his team used to create this mind-blowing short. From concepts and storyboards through to live-action compositing, no rock is left unturned as Jama explains how you too can use some simple tricks and methods to create professional quality, live-action animations without needing a professional budget.



Concepts and Storyboards

Software Used: Photoshop and After Effects

Introduction

Many thanks to the 2DArtist team for giving me this awesome opportunity to share the process I used to create my *Dreamscape* animation.

Being a self-taught artist I find that I need a lot of motivation to improve my skills and knowledge, and the 3DTotal team and 2DArtist magazine have always helped me with motivation by publishing my works and tutorials. This support always seems to force me to create better art.

I work as a concept artist and digital matte painter, but I have always wanted to be able to bring my static pictures to life. The reason I feel like this is because I think that animation is one of most exciting forms of modern art. However, as I am sure you are aware, animation is a very hard and expensive hobby and past time to pursue. It requires a lot of knowledge and, sadly, money. Although creating high quality animations is an expensive and tricky process, there are many shortcuts and creative ways by which you can cut the budget and minimize the amount of time it takes you to produce your video. I'll try to share some of these tips with you in the following chapters of this tutorial.

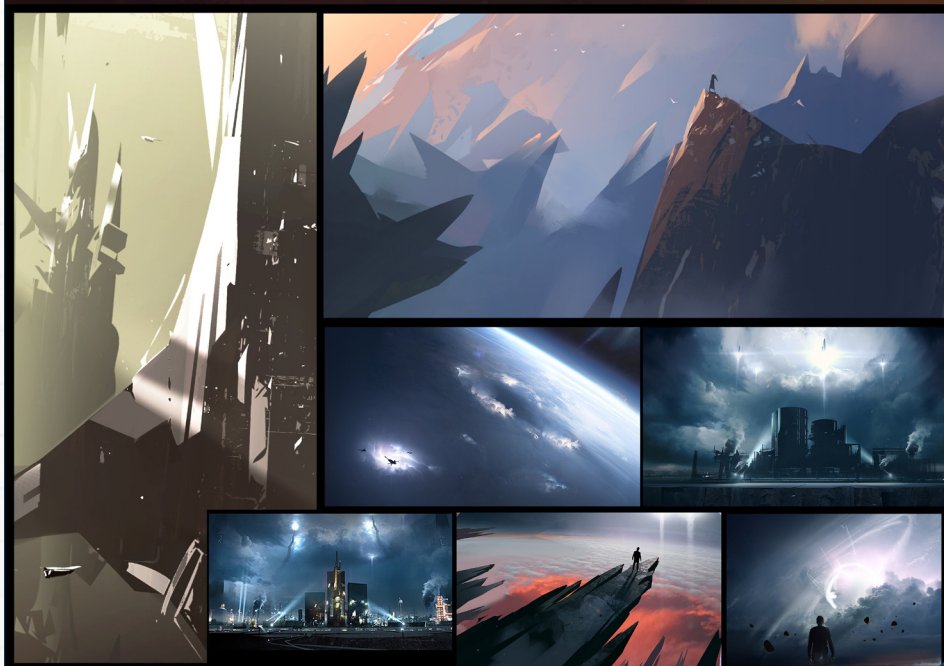
Storyboarding

Every project needs a good plan to be successful. I had a very limited amount of time and resources to complete this project, which is why I decided to make a trailer-like animation. So my goal was to create a short animation, which was like a trailer for a big movie.

Before I started anything I had a particular story in my mind. It was a story of a space pilot whose spacecraft crashes on an unknown planet. On this planet he is trapped between two realities. With this idea in my head I started to draw some very basic sketches and concepts, and ended up with **Fig.01**.



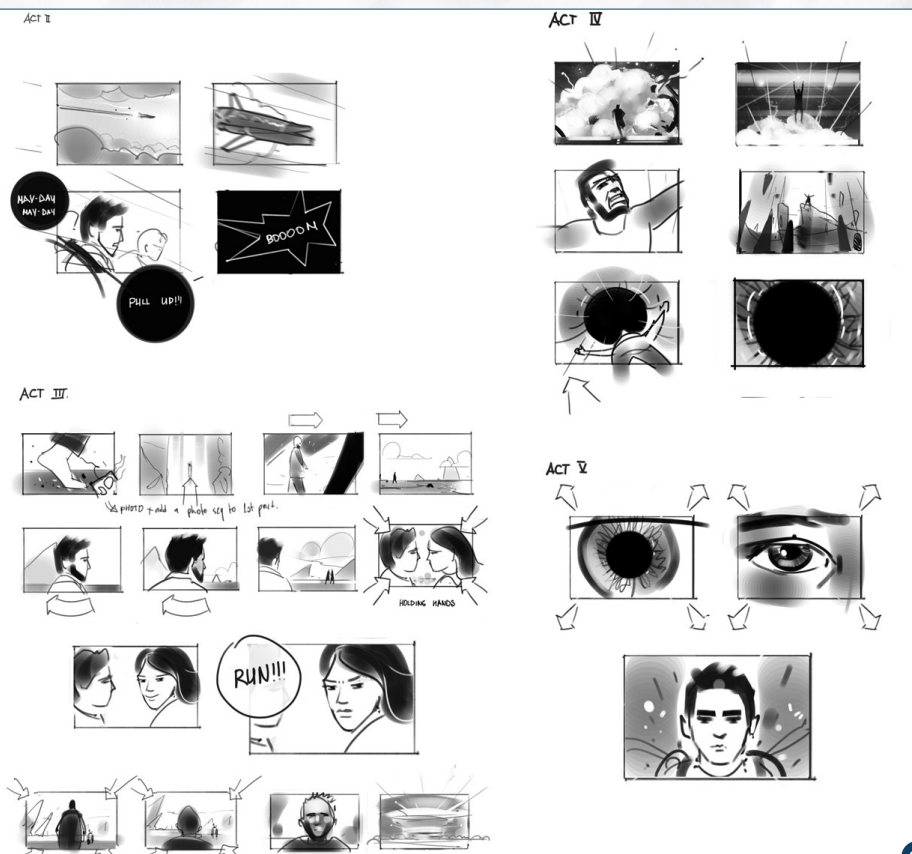
01



02

It is always good to take some time and explore a subject. I did this by creating quite a few more images. These helped a great deal as I began to finalize my idea for the animation. Some of these ideas and concepts were never used, but they helped guide me in the right direction and saved a lot of time later on in the process (**Fig.02**).

Once I had an approximate storyline, I started to work on a storyboard. I tried to avoid very complex and expensive shots at this point, as it wouldn't be efficient to find out later that your idea is too expensive to produce. It is essential to plan your shots carefully at this stage. I kept in mind the fact that I had very limited technical support, so I avoided shots with dramatic camera movement unless it was a fully CG shot.



The final storyboard was modified several times during the project, but mainly it remained as I had planned it from the beginning (Fig.03).

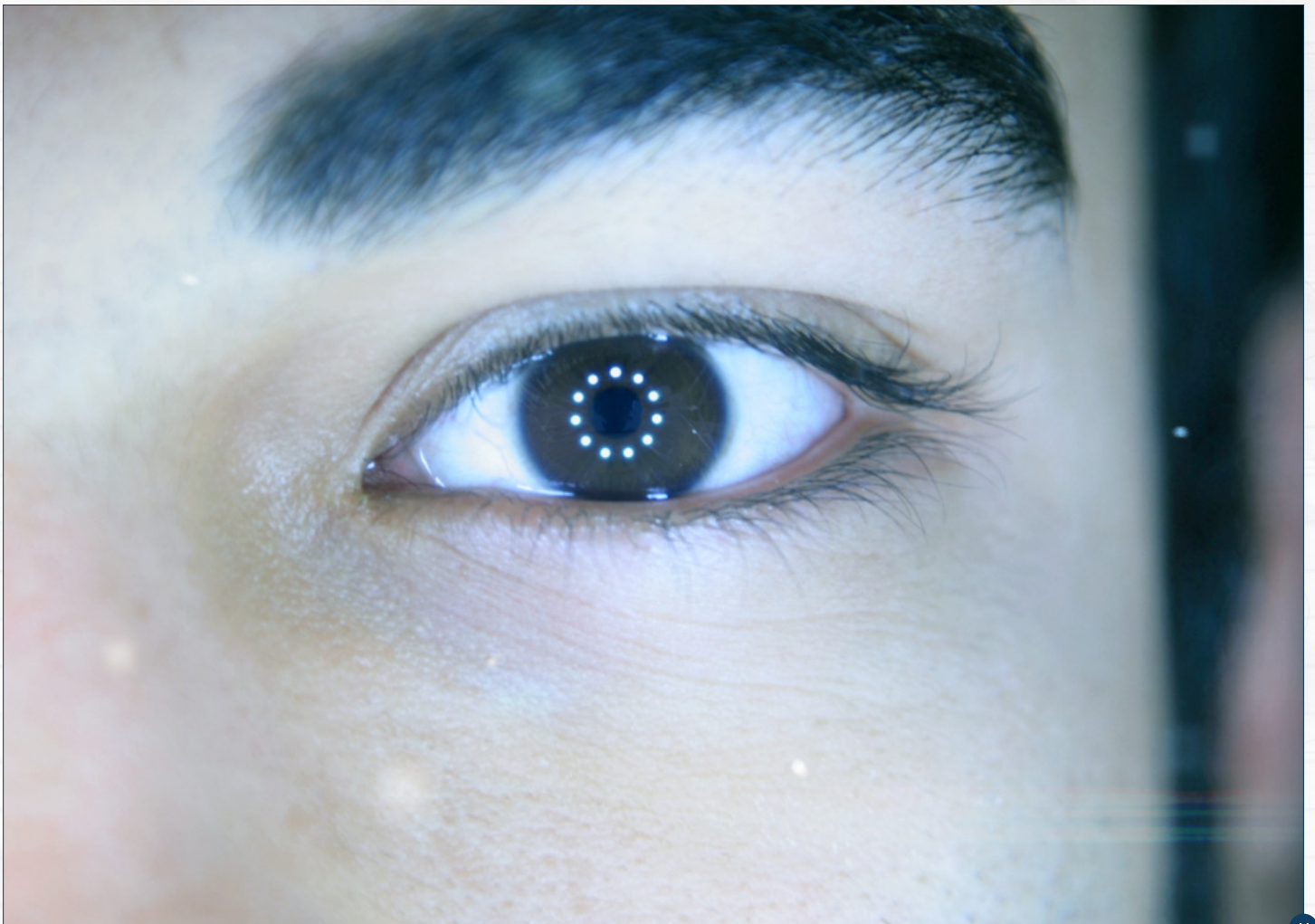
Concepts

The storyboard usually sets up the composition and the sequence of shots, but the design language of the whole animation is developed with the help of concepts. For every key scene I created a concept. Concepts show the lighting, mood and the final look of each of the shots.

Speed is critical when creating this kind of animation, particularly in a professional context, so you have to use logical means to produce clear concepts without using your time badly. For this reason I used a lot of photo elements to speed up my process. As I said before, it is quite important to take shortcuts when it is possible. Sometimes I use my old concept and paintings and mix them into my new scene to create new concepts, instead of creating everything from scratch. For example, in Fig.04 – 05 you can see how I adapted the spaceship from a tutorial I created for 2DArtist.







This same process of using photos and my older paintings was used to create the concepts in **Fig.06 – 11**.

I did have some doubts as to whether we would be able to use live footage with our animated background, so I created several tests that looked quite promising to me. I'll explain this process in-depth in following chapters (**Fig.12**).

I also created several designs for a ship that would feature in the animation at this point, but it was simplified later to save time (**Fig.13**).

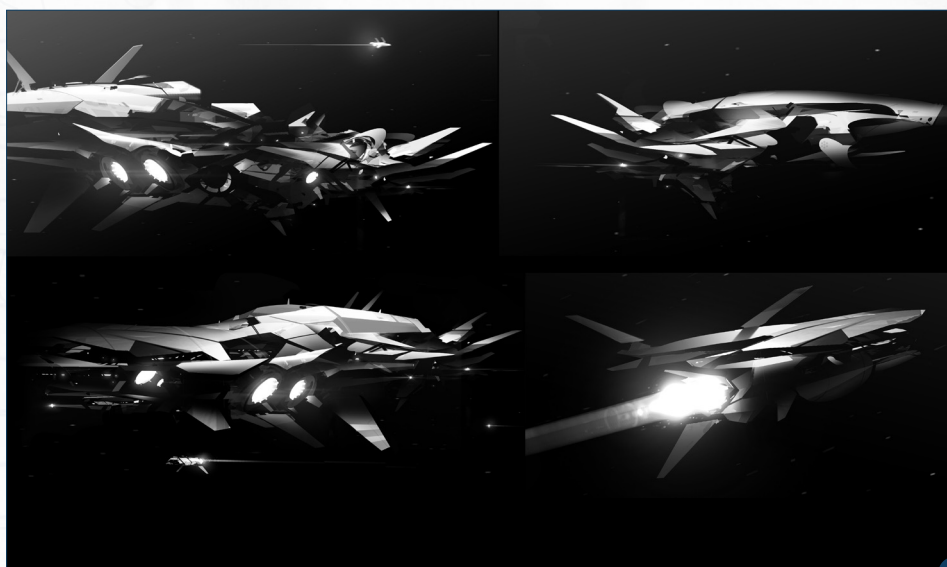
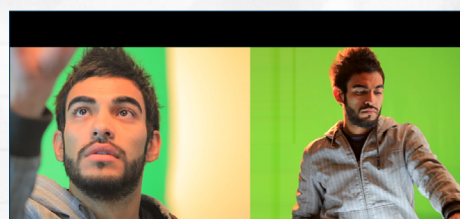
Jama Jurabaev

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12



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DESIGNING DROIDS

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Digital art has its place in many industries, but none of these rely on it as much as the games industry! Obviously games are made of many elements, but you could argue that the most important element of any game is the characters. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to design droids as if there were doing it within the games industry. This will involve them coming up with the design and showing you how to develop it to the point where they will even show you how to create the technical drawings for a 3D Modeler!

REPAIR DROID

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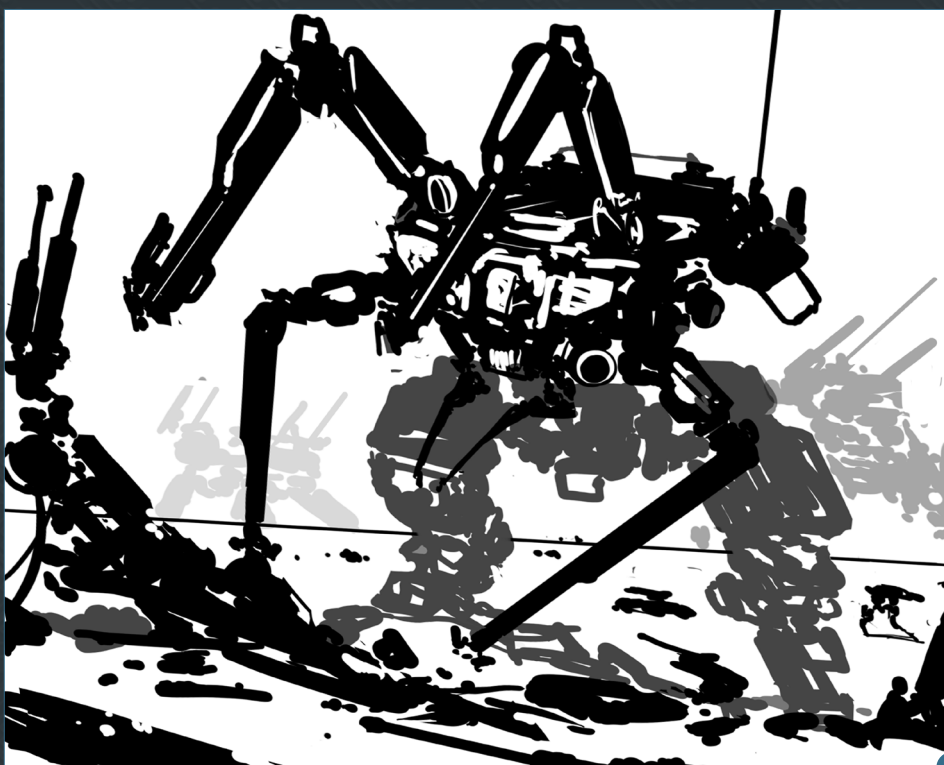
Chapter 2: Repair Droid

Software Used: Photoshop

Hello, my name is Alex Iglesias and I am a mech art addict! In this tutorial we're going to go through the process of designing and illustrating a repair droid.

Now when it comes to the basics of mech design, the first thing you want to ask yourself is, "What is this mech/droid supposed to do and how is going to do it?" In the case of this design, the "what" was part of the assignment and that was repairs. Now, to different people the idea of some sort of repair droid means different things. Some people might picture some sort of anthropomorphic robot handyman; others might imagine spiderbots working in unison, or maybe some kind of ambulatory multi-tool. In the case of this design, I pictured some sort of battlefield engineer unit that follows around combat units and patches them up, or tries to salvage them if they are blasted apart. With that approach in mind I began making sketches exploring that idea.

At this point the idea of the "how" began to form. It would fix up/interact with other droids via long spider-like appendages ending in pincers, tools, cutters, etc. After a small bit of exploration of silhouettes, I decided to depict the repair droid mid-work, sifting through wreckage while its allies converge on an off-screen fight in the background (**Fig.01**).



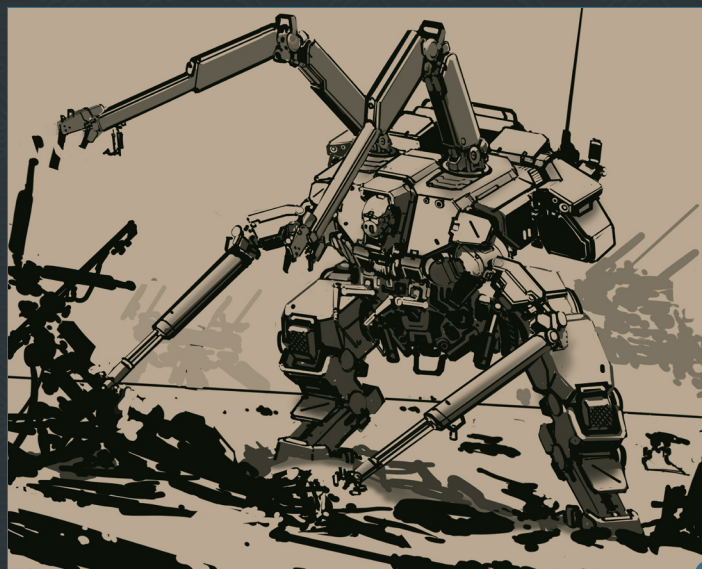
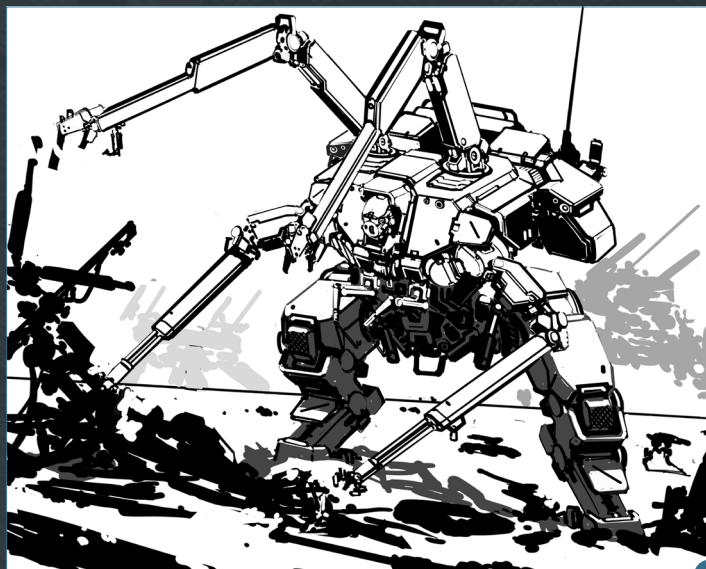
As I looked at the initial sketch it became apparent that there were a few things that didn't quite sit right in the image – it felt too static and lacked energy. The solution I found was to flip, warp and distort areas of the image to make things appear just a little bit more dynamic.

Tilting the horizon a little bit helped this too. Also I put more of a lean into the repair bot's pose, which added a little more implied weight to its form.

After I was happy with the sketch I started defining the originally ambiguous shape from the

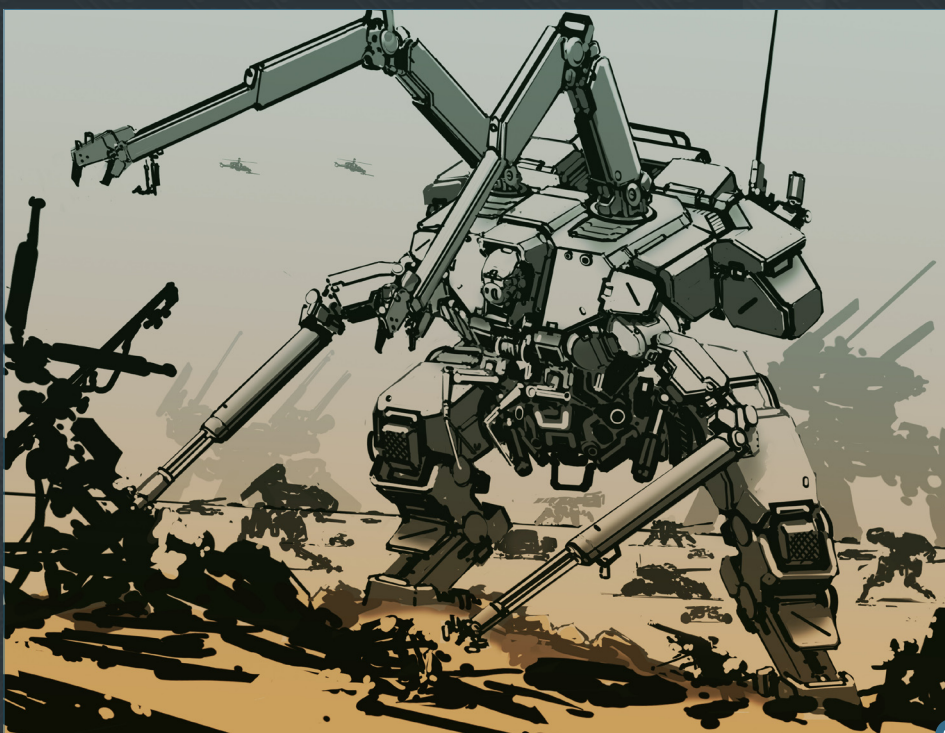
sketch into more specific surfaces. I also began experimenting with certain dark areas and aspects of lighting. However, it was still fairly crude and more clean-up work and refinement continued well into the process of this piece (**Fig.02**).

Immediately after I was comfortable with the basic details and layout, I added a flat brown tone over the whole image and added some rudimentary shadows, in order to provide a bit of a background tone as I continued the rendering process (**Fig.03**).

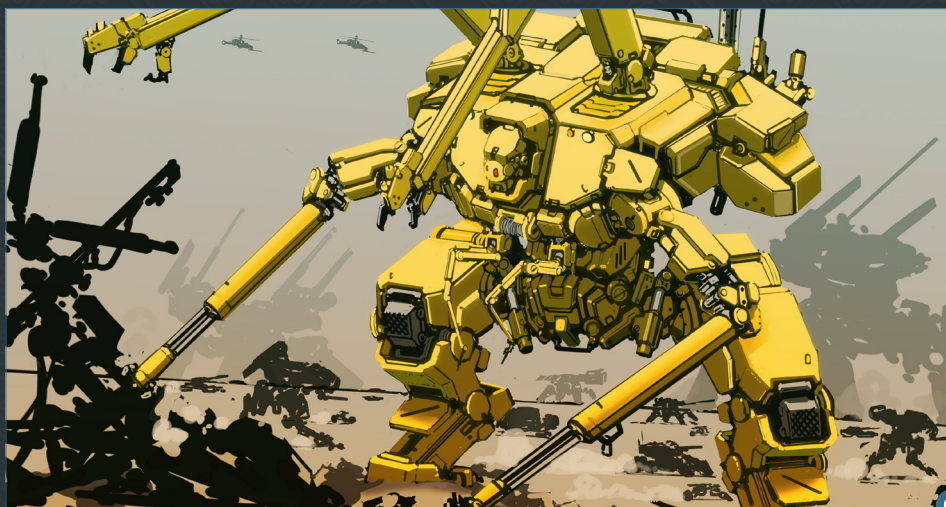


I began to add some color gradients to start establishing the dusty atmosphere of the piece, and started to clean up the design of the droid itself. I also began to establish the forms of the background vehicles at this point. I really wanted to give the impression of some large mobilization consisting of a combined arms force. Part of the reason for this was to give the viewer some rough idea of what the blasted wreckage at the repair droid's feet might have looked like (**Fig.04**).

For some reason I really enjoy bright yellow color schemes on vehicles. So in the case of this repair droid, to help distinguish it from the combat units and to make it associated with industrial equipment, I applied an Overlay layer of a bright, school bus yellow! I didn't add this yellow to the areas I wanted to leave as exposed metal. I also painted in some dust to



04



05

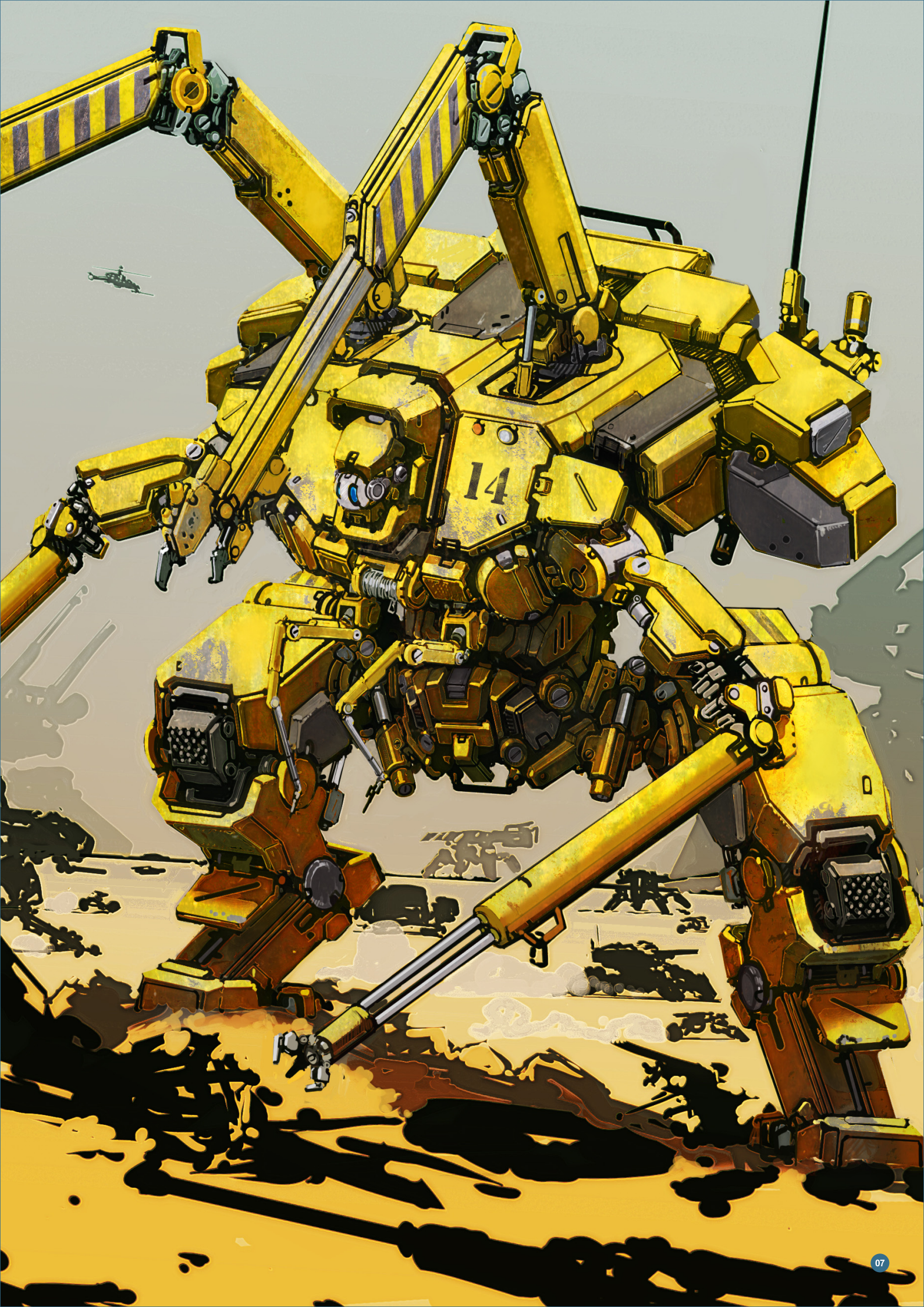
show the movement of all of the droids in the scene (**Fig.05**).

I wanted to differentiate areas further, help diversify the color scheme and add even more of an industrial flavor, so I made several surfaces much darker and unpainted. The caution strip was also added to several areas as it's a classic, easily identifiable motif that helps cement the industrial aspect further. In order to make the machine appear more used, areas of chipping and fading in the paint were added. Experimentation with the color scheme via the Hue and Saturation tool also caused the overall colors to become brighter and more vibrant (**Fig.06**).



06

After taking another look at the image, I found that the colors actually a bit too saturated now and the machine was still not looking worn enough! More weathering was added using grunge brushes I had, in addition to some smaller clean-ups and edits. The overall effect made the machine appear a little darker and its paint job a bit more mottled. At this point I also felt that one of the surfaces was woefully empty and decided to add a number decal for fun. Areas that were meant to be bare metal were also considerably more defined at this stage in the progress (**Fig.07**).



The mech's details were pretty much nailed down at this point, so it was necessary to move on to other aspects of the piece. In this case the foreground. First and foremost I had to come up with some convincing dirt! Using the underlying color plus a texture I found I was able to create exactly what I was looking for (**Fig.08**). After that I had to edit the overall silhouette of the scattered debris, cleaning up the shapes and adding form to them. For added form and detail I used various metal textures and grunge brushes at low opacity to get the necessary amounts of metal noise. The fires were essentially tweaked and modified textures that I applied using the Lighter Color layer style, which really gives that sort of "flames in broad daylight appearance."

With the foreground and focus point where I wanted them it was time to finish off the background. The attack units took a bit of work, namely in cleaning up or adjusting the individual silhouettes. But as they were relatively small, implied detail went a long way here.

The giant weapon platforms in the far distance also got some measure of refinement and definition, but not too much as it would not be conducive to conveying their far away distance and immense size.



08

My personal favorite part of the background though was the creation of the artillery muzzle flash on the far left giant mech platform. Essentially it was just a sketched blob shape that had some tweaked fire textures dropped in it. The texture was then merged, set to Lighter Color and dropped in opacity (**Fig.09**).

The end result was something relatively minor, but it goes a long way to showing how much dust and distance there is between it and the viewer. A considerable amount of hand-drawn smoke clouds were also involved.

The image was now looking pretty solid to me, but it was still a bit too clean and flat. Something had to be done about that. Using some gray on a Color layer I opted to desaturate certain areas of the image to make the repair droid seem a bit more worn. Also, finding the bare metal surfaces themselves a little lacking, I decided to clean them up and contrast them a bit more, so as to make those parts stand out.

Although the image up to now looked dusty, it didn't really look that acrid, scorched earth, type of dusty. I really wanted that "carcinogens in the



09



air" type of smoke factor in my image. Using some textures of overcast skies and various clouds, and some tweaking of layer types and opacities, I managed to get the amount of smoke desired (Fig.10).

Lastly it came down to adjusting the general color, hue, saturation and contrasts to finally make the image pop, plus a few general color overlays and gradients. After a fair bit of tweaking the various image aspects I finally reached a point where I was satisfied with it. The air in the image looked so thick that it could have been cut with a knife. Also the mech looked well-used and sturdy, which fitted the image perfectly (Fig.11).

Alexander Iglesias

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PAINTING CREATURES FROM MYTHOLOGY



Myths, legends and fantasy creatures have always been influential when it comes to digital art. In fact, many artists will never really stray too far from these sorts of themes and ideas. In this series a selection of stunning artists will be taking this popular subject and exploring some of its more diverse and lesser known characters. Throughout the series each artist will be given a brief for a character which they will need to interpret and turn into an illustration. To make things a little more interesting this will be done by not one but two artists, one using Photoshop and the other using Painter. This will not only show some of the differences between the two pieces of software, but will also show how the same brief can be interpreted in two different ways. This month **Carlos Cabrera** and **Simon Dominic Brewer** tackle the **Hidebehind**.



Chapter 3: Hidebehind

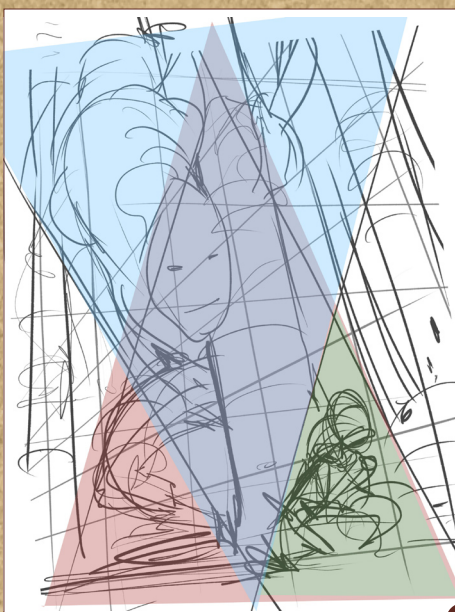
Software Used: Photoshop

Our subject matter in this tutorial is a hidebehind, which is a nocturnal creature that lives in dark forests. The first thought that came to my mind was the Ents from *The Lord of the Rings*. The hidebehind is a creature that hunts lost lumberjacks in creepy forests, but Ents are peaceful creatures. So I took the basic idea of an Ent-like creature and added extra features to transform it into a creepy nocturnal predator.

To start, create a very rough sketch of the monster in your head. As the aim is to paint an immersing and dynamic illustration you have to think about the camera angle and focal point. In this case it will be the lumberjack and the second focal point will be the monster with the dark forest as the background.

The first thing we have to do is think about the color palette. Start by thinking about the cold and warm colors to simplify the process. In this case, in my image, I decided on a pale turquoise for the background and a rich green for the monster to keep the colors cool. You may be thinking, "Why green?" The reason I used green is because we want the painting to move from cold to warm colors, and green contains yellow, which makes it slightly warmer than turquoise.

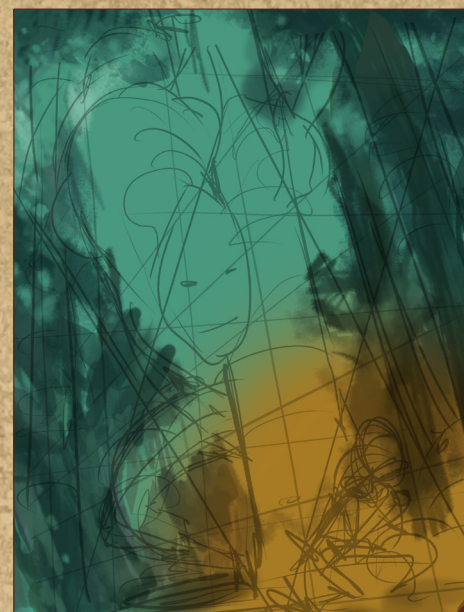
OK, so we know about the colors in the background and on the creature, but what about the lumberjack? The obvious choice is warmer colors like the nice orange in fire. This warm



01

area we'll pop-out of the image and create the focal point we were looking for.

So with this in mind we can continue with our sketch. The first thing we need to establish is the perspective and some sort of idea about composition (**Fig.01**). I used a triangular composition to emphasize our two big focal areas. One triangle contained the monster and the forest in the background. The second triangle, which was the same as the other but inverted, contained the creature's head and the lumberjack. Once these two triangles were in place it created some further triangles and I decided to place the entire body of the lumberjack in this triangle. It is important for you to think about how you would like to view the image when you are setting up the composition of the scene.



02

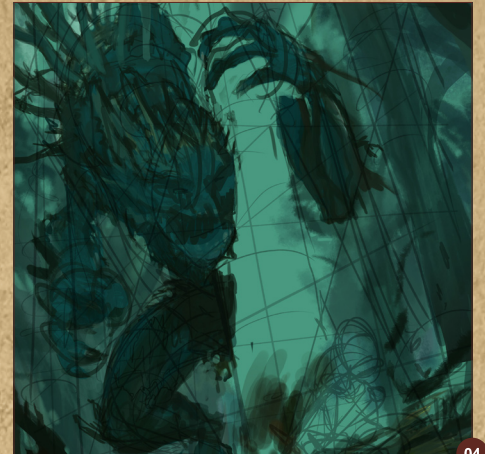
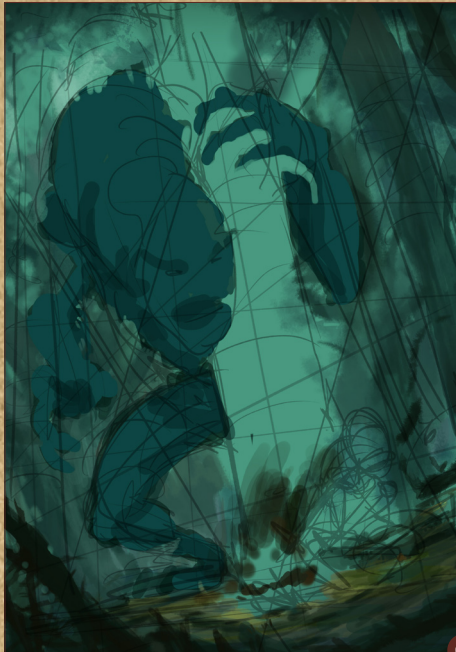
When the frame is in place it is time to start adding some colors. To start with we can keep it simple by adding the cold and warm areas. As the background is all turquoise it can be bucket filled. You can see how I have also added the warm color to my painting (**Fig.02**). To start with you simply want to add the ambient color of the warm area rather than detailing anything.

When you're at this point, it's time to add some volume to the creature and colors to the floor. Do you remember the ghost with the white mask in *Spirited Away*? In one part of the movie he starts to eat people and convert himself into an abomination with a long neck, heavy legs and big arms. Well that's exactly what I had in mind, as you can see (**Fig.03**). We don't need to add detail here, just big strokes to show how the overall shape works in the scene. Remember

when doing this that foreground objects like branches or foliage will be darker or black. The mid-ground objects will be less black and the background will not be black at all. By following this you will achieve a sense of depth.

At this point we need to continue working on the monster. I thought a good idea would be to add branches to his back, which would act a bit like natural camouflage so he can get close to his prey without being detected. With a round brush, start to add some shadows to his legs and dark spots where the eyes and mouth will be, remembering to keep the features in the triangles that we created earlier. (Fig.04)

As you can see, you don't need to worry about how it looks. This stage has to be very artistic



and fast. Try not to think too much and just try to achieve the feel you want for your image. Concentrate on how the line flows and the rhythm of the overall image. If you fill your head with different techniques and worry too much about specific features, that worry will be translated to the image and the spectator will see it without really knowing what is wrong with the illustration. I'm not a great artist and I still have a lot to learn, but I try to enjoy every illustration and translate that emotion to the viewer. Remember to take your time to think through every step before you start and then just let the strokes flow.

In Fig.05, you can see a more advanced step. To get to this point you need to keep working bit by bit on your creature. I developed its head and neck and gave volume to the tree. Although the color in the background looks lighter, it is in fact the same color as it was before. It looks lighter because the creature has more volume and is darker than it was before.

Some branches carefully placed here and there accentuate the triangular composition that we started with. Once you have finished adding the volume to your monster you can start using free textures to add more detail and realism to the creature. Pick a nice wood texture and add it to a new layer set to Overlay mode with a low level of opacity. In Fig.05 you can see where some texture has been added to the creature's leg.

Now we have the overall mood created, we can add the lumberjack. We want to use big paint strokes again at this point and avoid getting



too wrapped up in the detail. I also added some mushrooms to the tree to break the monochromatic look of the trunk. I drew these in reds and oranges as I thought they would look great next to the campfire later (**Fig.06**). Here you can see how the lumberjack has a clear silhouette made from color with almost no detail at all on him yet.

To accentuate the cold background, I painted the lumberjack sitting next to a fire. This kind of thing adds story and interest to the image, as the viewer will be able to see that it is a cold, nighttime scene.

At this point it is a case of continuing to work on the character and adding more detail. It is important to continue developing the image as a whole so you can also work on the branches that were being burnt on the fire. You can also add some photo elements like the photo I used for the fire. I added the photo and adjusted it to Screen layer mode. It is handy to remember that whenever you are adding fire, explosions, blast or areas of light to your image it should be done in Screen mode. Textures like rock and wood etc., are best applied on Overlay or Multiply. You can also use Color Dodge to add light, but you would need to do it at a quite low opacity. Don't try to paint all the light on a character or in the background with Color Dodge, as it will look awful and very digital! Try to paint it in Normal mode and use these kinds of tricks in the final stages. In **Fig.07** you can see how a simple image of fire in Screen mode and an orangey color set to Overlay give our lumberjack a nice finished campfire.

We are almost finished at this point. The detail on the image looks good and if I were to add any more detail, the image would start to look over saturated. At this point, it's good to change some of the stuff than may have been bothering you from the beginning. For example, in my image, I wasn't happy with the creature's face or hands. They looked cool but not scary enough! You can see here how I updated them (**Fig.08**). The hand didn't look as if it was resting in the tree, so I decided to change the position of the fingers.

The nose looked a little strange as well so I change it for a more human-looking nose. If you think about it, he has got hands, legs and a face so it makes sense to give him a human-looking nose as well.

On the forehead, I put some strange symbols to add some mystery. Now it looked more creature-like and less like a tree!

This final stage is very important! The painting is looking good so far, but there is something missing. Maybe it's detail, or maybe we need more characters in the scene? It is very easy to think that the problem at this point is detail, but it's not – it's the light! We need a secondary light, which is a light that comes from the



06



07

environment or something in it. So far all we really have is the ambient light, which is a turquoise color, and some glow from the fire. At this point you need to pick the brightest color from the background, add a little white to it and add some light to the tree and mushrooms. Don't be afraid to cover some of your detail with this color; your image will need this kind of light. You can see how quickly it improved my painting (**Fig.09**). It really makes the monster pop out of the background! The same sort of lighting can be added to the lumberjack as well to separate him from the background.

This is starting to look good, but there is still more to be done. The same effect would be caused by the campfire. So at this point we need to do the same as we did with the other light: pick a lighter version of the color of the fire and add it to all the surrounding elements like the tree, mushrooms and the creature. This stage is extremely important to do. If you forget to add this kind of "cinematic" light to your scene, the illustration is going to look unfinished.

You may decide at this point that you want to add more textures to the scene (**Fig.10**). Here you can see the texture I used to add a little more detail to the trunk. I also added some sparks coming from the fire.

The important thing to remember is this order of doing things: composition, color, volume, detail and secondary light. If you follow these steps carefully, your paintings will start to look better and your process will become faster.

Thanks again for reading one of my tutorials. I encourage you to follow these simple steps and paint at least one monster to test these fun Photoshop techniques. Over and out!

Carlos Cabrera

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08



09



10





Chapter 3: Hidebehind

Software Used: Painter

Introduction

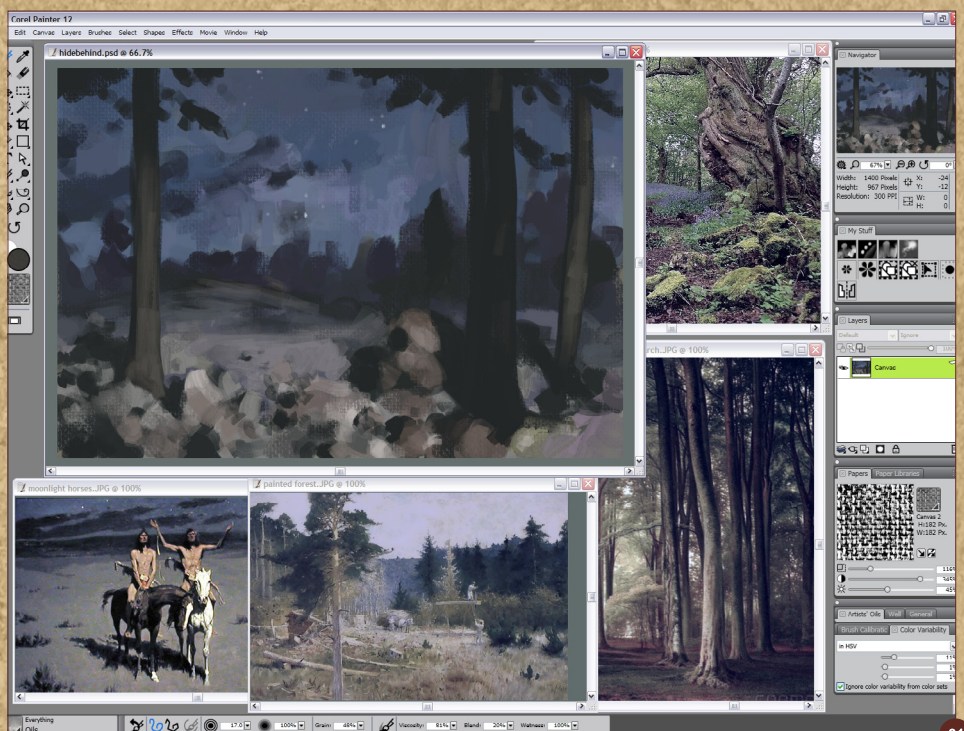
The somewhat unimaginatively named hidebehind is documented in American folklore and is reputed to be a fearsome, nocturnal creature that lives in the woods and preys on unsuspecting humans. Vicious and secretive, it was blamed for the disappearance of colonial loggers when they failed to return to camp. As you might have guessed, the key feature of the hidebehind is its ability to swiftly hide behind things, usually trees, whenever someone glances in its direction. The hidebehind is described as a large and powerful animal, although this is likely to be an assumption owing to the fact that nobody has ever seen one... or at least, seen one and lived.

In this tutorial, I'll be painting the hidebehind in its natural habitat. Because the creature has no official description other than big and fearsome, I needed to invent something of my own. Due to the nature of the hidebehind, I decided the image should be an environment-based piece and for this reason I worked in landscape format.

I used Painter 12 for the whole tutorial.

Gathering Reference and Making a Start

My first step was to gather some inspiration and get some sort of rough landscape down on canvas. For inspiration, I looked for photos and



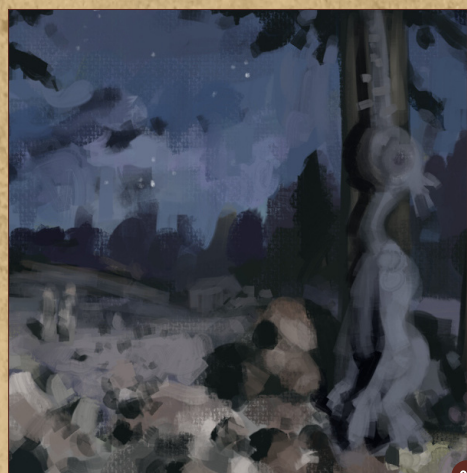
paintings of woodland and partially desaturated them so I could better see the tonal ranges. Seeing as the hidebehind is a nocturnal creature, my scene needed to take place at night, under a full moon. With this in mind, I checked out a couple of Frederic Remington paintings. Frederic Remington was an American painter who depicted a number of moonlit settings in his work. I took note of the palettes he used and the way he portrayed light and shadow, and tried to emulate that in my initial sketch.

Moonlight creates a different visual effect to sunlight, even though it is essentially the same thing. In our eyes, we have two constructs that

allow us to see and these are called "cones" and "rods". Cones allow us to see colors and function well in bright light. Rods are very good at seeing in dim light, but are unable to perceive color. This means that in moonlight, which is many thousands of times dimmer than sunlight, we see using rods and can therefore perceive much less color than we can during the day.

Another attribute of moonlight is that it casts very dark shadows, because there is so little light being reflected from the sky and other parts of the landscape.

I created a small canvas of 1400 x 967 pixels, which represented the same aspect ratio as my



02

intended final image. Working with a big Artists' Oils brush and a rough canvas Paper texture, I color-picked from a Frederic Remington piece to get the basic tones down, using very dark colors for the shadows and ensuring they were consistent with a bright moon somewhere over the viewer's right shoulder (**Fig.01**).

The Hidebehind

I included a large tree trunk in the foreground and it's behind this that the hidebehind would, er, hide behind! I considered making the creature man-like, but I thought that a humanoid creature concealing itself behind a tree is not a particularly difficult or a noteworthy feat. So I decided to make the hidebehind a quadruped, with long front legs and squat hindquarters. I also gave him a hugely long snout, like a crocodile. When he conceals himself amongst the trees he must sit back on his haunches and angle his head vertically, so that his snout does not poke out the side of his hiding place. In this way, we can communicate to the viewer that this behavior is something inherent to the hidebehind's nature and not just what he happens to be doing at the time.

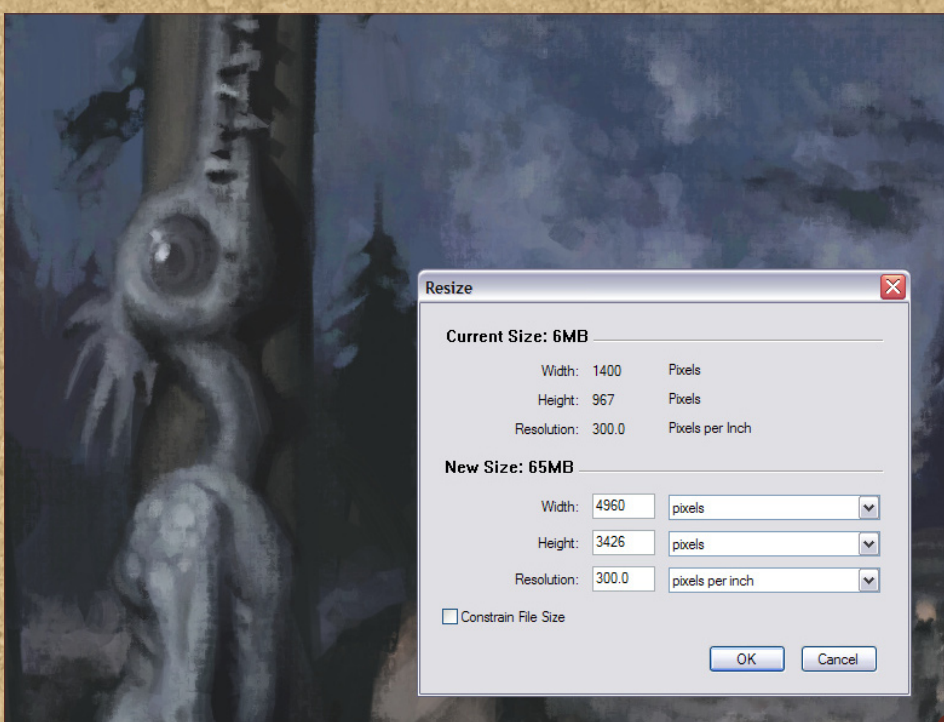
I roughly sketched the creature's form, using my Artists' Oils brush, ensuring that the shadows were consistent with my primary light source, which was the full moon. I also gave him big, staring eyes on account of him being nocturnal (**Fig.02**).

Cementing the Basics

Still working small and painting roughly, I blocked in my colors across the whole canvas,



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making sure that all the main elements were where I wanted them to be and the lighting worked well. I included the figures of two loggers coming home from a hard day's work. I placed them left of centre, but not too far towards the edge or they'd become lost and the relationship between them and the hidebehind would not be as strong.

As usual, I frequently flipped the image horizontally as I progressed, in order to pick up things I would otherwise overlook (**Fig.03**).

Upsizing

When I was ready to begin work on the detail, I upsized my image to its final size - 4960 x 3426 pixels. The paper texture I'd been using in my

rough stages was even more pronounced now and I tended to use it as a base to add random detail later on, such as grass and tree bark (**Fig.04**).

The Night Sky

The way I approached painting the sky was to have some distant, fuzzy clouds lit by moonlight and some closer, dark clouds that are maybe the remnants of a rainstorm. I represented the clear sky using a deep, low-saturation blue and later I dotted some stars in there. Go out during the full moon, under a clear sky, and let your eyes adjust for a few minutes. You'll see that the sky is actually several shades lighter than the horizon and so in this piece, I tried to replicate that effect, exaggerating it slightly for emphasis.



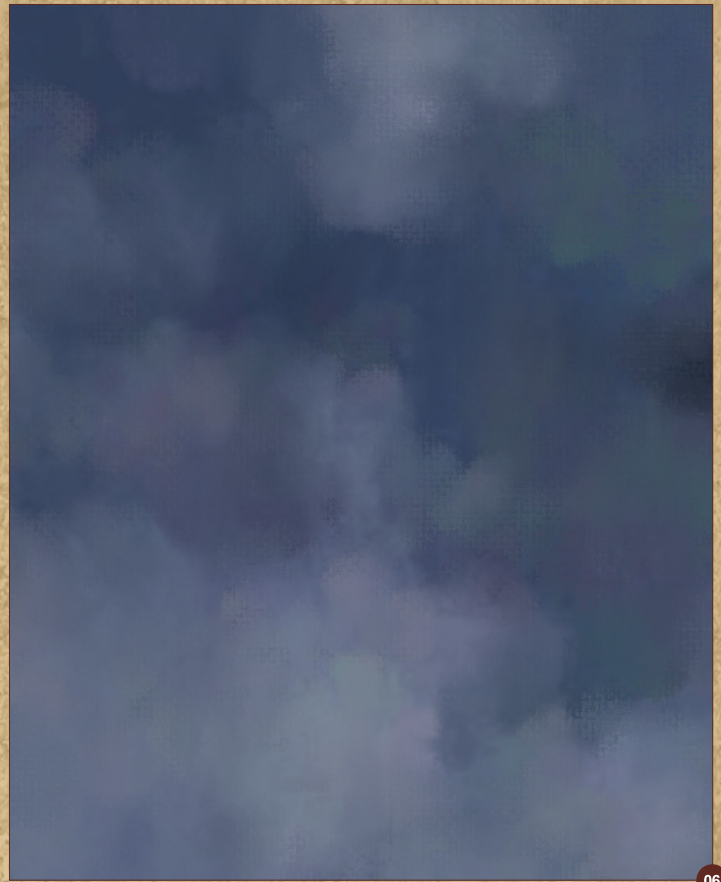
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I added a hint of warmth to the horizon to represent the lingering light of the sun (**Fig.05**).

Blending the Sky

Once I was happy with the overall look of the sky, I set about blending the colors for a more convincing cloudy effect. I did this in two stages. First, I used a basic circular brush set to Grainy Soft Cover and with Opacity set to Expression Pressure. I also set the Color Variability to H: 18%, S: 1%, V: 1%. This meant that every dab would vary noticeably in terms of hue (color) and only very slightly in terms of saturation and value (also called tone, or light and dark). The greater the saturation, the more obvious the hue variation is, so because I was using low saturation colors the variation is still quite subtle. It results in faint purples and greens being present when painting with a blue brush and I found that helped to replicate the look of the eyes in a low-light environment.

When I'd gone over the sky areas with the round brush, I used an Artists' Oils brush with Amount set to 0% and Grain set to 50%, for proper blending. I used this brush sparingly, teasing the



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edges of the clouds and blending the areas of open sky a little more strongly (**Fig.06**).

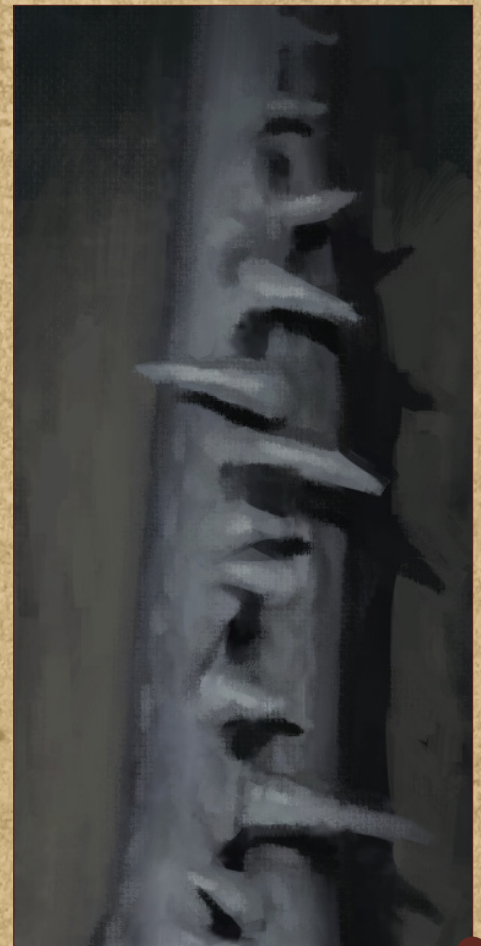
Teeth

The creature's muzzle is basically a long beak lined with teeth. I faded it into darkness towards the top of the canvas so that it does not lead the viewer's gaze out of the image. I was also careful to include the black shadows in their appropriate places, as these related to the position of the moon.

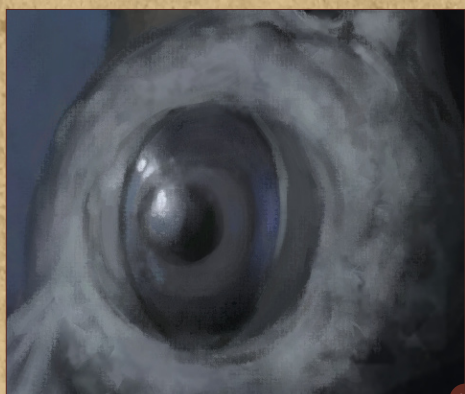
Because the moonlight is so dim, I resisted the urge to use a lot of bright highlights. I used the occasional bright specular reflection later, but overall I kept the values restrained in the mid to dark range. In terms of color, I gave the creature a blue tint and the tree trunk a brown tint, to provide a better distinction between the two (**Fig.07**).

Painting the Eye

I gave my hidebehind a huge staring eye, all the better for him to see his prey at night. First, I painted a dark circle to represent the full eye, followed by a lighter iris. On the surface facing



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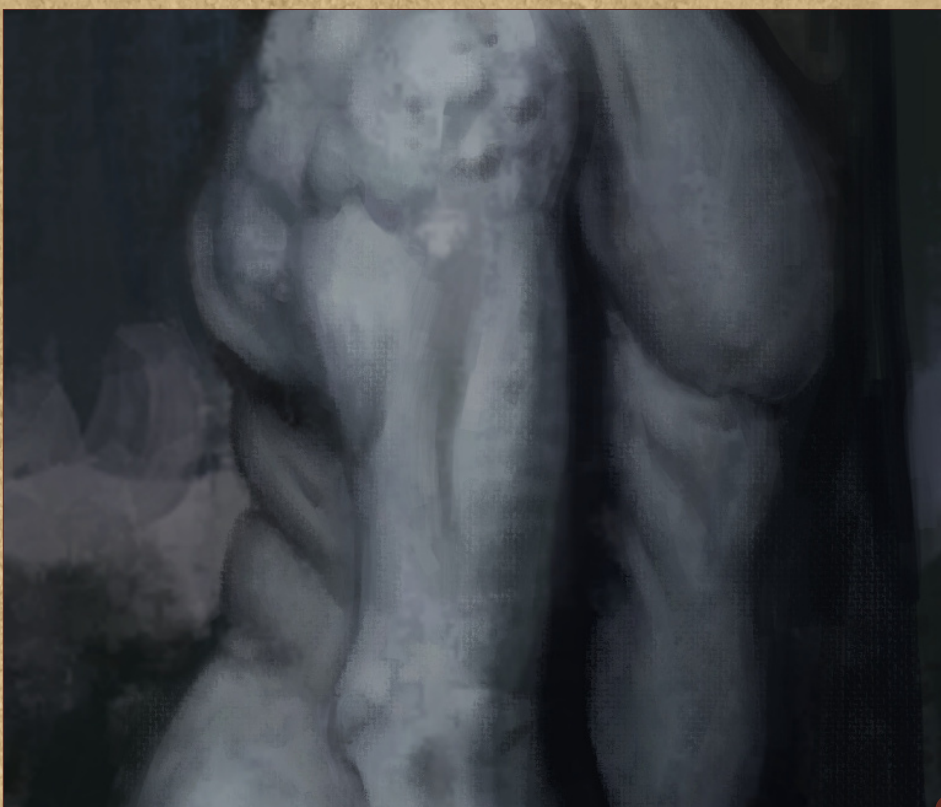
the off-canvas moon, I painted a couple of specular highlights. Around the highlights, I also painted a diffused area of lesser brightness to simulate the surface film over the eye. On the side of the eye opposite to where the moonlight falls, I dabbed a little higher contrast blue, as if the light is passing through the transparent eye and emerging on the other side. Last of all, I add a couple of eyelids, adding a shadow line on the top one and a highlight line on the lower one, in order to give the impression they have thickness.

It's perfectly fine to use layers when painting something like this, but usually I don't. I find that working directly onto the canvas concentrates the mind and forces me to understand how each brush stroke affects the existing paint. Also, I find more than a couple of layers confusing and always end up painting on the wrong one! (Fig.08).

Alien Muscles

Just to clarify, I mean alien as in "unusual", not extraterrestrial, although the same concept applies. It's more difficult than it looks to create an animal that looks viable, but doesn't resemble an existing creature, and a big part of that is getting the musculature right. Here I went with powerful shoulders and chest muscles, and strong, wiry legs. The upper arms are vaguely humanoid, with the triceps and biceps muscles clearly visible.

Where the shoulder attaches to the body, I painted some creases and fatty overhangs to give the impression that the arm is not just stuck on there. The broad chest muscles suggest a creature with powerful forelimbs and the ability



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to move quickly. I also added folds of flesh to the mid and lower back, to make it apparent that the creature is a little overweight, no doubt from consuming too many loggers.

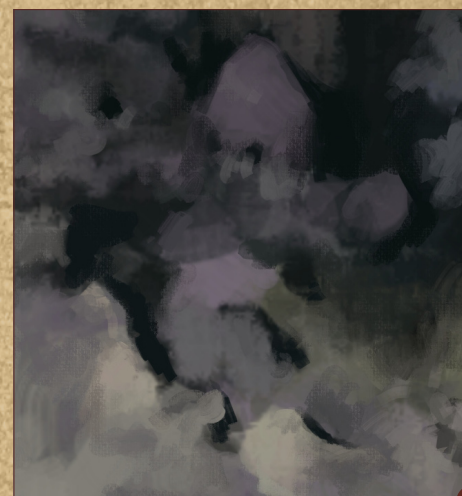
For the feet, I went with hooves, emphasizing that this is a fast-moving beast. Because the hidebehind is squatting rather than standing, I painted his hind feet parallel to the ground, just like a sitting dog (Fig.09).

Painting the Ground

In low light we can see less detail than in strong light, such as sunlight. The key thing here is to avoid making the ground and the environment too fussy and instead to concentrate mainly on the contrast between dark shadow and the moonlit grass and rock. I used firm pressure in order to produce the sharp lines of the shadowed areas and lighter pressure for the tufts of grass, the stone and the earth textures (Fig.10).

Making Rocks Look Real

Because I had already done the groundwork for the rocks, they already had basic form and texture. The dim light means that I had less of a value range to play with than if it were daytime,



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so I was careful not to make my lighter colors too bright.

When painting the rock, I tried to imagine its three-dimensional form in my head and divide the rock into planes. The planes directly facing the light are generally the brightest, whereas those facing away at an angle are dimmer. If a plane is not impacted by the light at all, then, bearing in mind it's moonlight and the shadows are dark, I would paint it as almost black. I emphasized some of the edges that separate planes with faint highlights and this helped bring out the shape of the rock. As I painted, I



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color-picked from the canvas and also from the Temporal Color Palette, which I had assigned to the \ key for easy access. To add the final touches, I used my circular brush with the Color Variability set. This gave a nice mottled effect, ideal for anything organic (**Fig.11**).

The Loggers

The two loggers comprised the secondary focus; the primary focus being the hidebehind himself. I painted them looking in the direction of the creature, but their relaxed gait and neutral expressions shows that they haven't actually seen him. Perhaps they saw a movement out of the corner of their eyes and, like the legends say, when they turned their gaze towards it, there was nothing there.

I then zoomed in to between 100-150% to add detail to this area. Because these two gentlemen were also the secondary focus of the piece, I used a slightly stronger color for their skin, so that they were not lost in the landscape (**Fig.12**).



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The Path

To make sure the two loggers weren't just wandering aimlessly around, I included a path that meandered from the distant trees then moves off left (in the current orientation) across our field of view. I left the path ill-defined, as it would be if it were a well-travelled footpath, rather than a purpose-built affair. I painted it in a light, desaturated brown color so that it looked dusty (**Fig.13**).

Adding Interest

To add a little interest, I painted an old wooden hut in the middle distance and surrounded it with bushes and discarded planks of wood. I kept the paint values within a very narrow range so as not to draw too much attention and I kept the

detail to a minimum for the same reason. I also included a pile of tree-trunks not far from the hut, to reinforce the idea that the loggers have been working in the area (**Fig.14**).

Rocky Outcrop

I turned a blob of paint in the middle-distance into a rocky outcrop. Again, there's no need to go overboard on definition and so instead, I let the brush textures suggest most of the detail, and only concentrated on the direction of the light source and the position of the shadows. I find that reducing the paper dimensions in the Paper panel can give a really good grainy effect, which helps to prevent the over-smooth result you can sometimes get with digital brushes (**Fig.15**).



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Heavens Above

I dotted a few stars into the darker patches in the sky to represent the gaps between the distant clouds. I also varied the sizes of the stars just slightly, and over the larger ones, I applied a couple of dabs of a Glow brush set to a deep red color (Fig.16).

The Foreground Leaves

I had already roughed in the leaves on the foreground trees and so now it was time to refine them. I didn't want to paint every leaf and besides, it was too dark to distinguish such details, so I used a small circular brush to paint a jagged outline against the night sky. To achieve the sharp edges I color-picked the sky in that area and used that to paint the gaps

between the leaves. Here and there, I left thin lines to represent branches and twigs (Fig.17).

Finishing Up

I went over the entire image and cleaned up any loose ends, and then left it for a short while before coming back to it and checking again. The first thing I noticed was that the two loggers were still slightly lost in the background. To remedy this, I used a quick method of highlighting using a new layer set to Overlay. I set the layer to 40% and dabbed some bright white paint onto it, then dropped the layer onto the canvas. This had the effect of strengthening the light falling on the two gentlemen by increasing the brightness and saturation of their shirts and skin.

I decided to shorten the shadows throughout the image, effectively making the unseen moon higher in the sky. I also adjusted one of the tree shadows, so it was partially falling on one of the loggers, which I think helps to integrate the two characters with their environment.

When I was happy with the image, I increased the image contrast just a touch and saved it as a TIF (Fig.18).

Simon Dominic

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"In my opinion, it's really important to have a good understanding of light, and especially of color theory"

THE MEETING

MAKING OF BY MARKUS LOVADINA

Markus Lovadina is an incredible artist who can create amazing digital art using just a few tools. From using different custom brushes and shapes in Photoshop to adding the smallest details, Markus talks us through every step he went through to paint this beautiful, ethereal scene.

Making Of The Meeting:

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

The Meeting is a personal image, created mainly to improve my skills and try to achieve a more illustrational feel than I do in most of my other work. I had no ideas about how this image should turn out; the only thing I had in mind was that it should have a lot more detail than my other paintings. So, the goal was set and I made a couple of thumbnail sketches to find an interesting idea and composition.

After some simple sketches, I had the idea of a young man meeting his robot friend. Time to open up Photoshop!

The Brushes

I'm still a big fan of customized brushes and shapes. Those brushes give me the option to concentrate, in my opinion, on more important things such as composition, color balance and values. The use of them also speeds up the entire process.

Blocking In

Based on my simple sketches, I started to block in the main colors and shapes by using the Palm brush and a normal round brush. For the ground, I used a huge, hard, round brush to set the colors and the first "details" were made with customized shapes. When you work with customized shapes, Photoshop automatically



creates a new layer. With the shapes on the new layer, I picked the Eraser tool and started to get rid of unnecessary areas or sections that had too much detail (**Fig.01**).

First Details

When I was happy with the initial blocking and look of the image, I merged all the layers together. I then created a new layer and started to paint in my foreground elements by using the Palm brush in a large size. The brush modifications were set to Scatter, Size and Opacity, which gave a more random look. I also used the same brush for the palm tree tips.

Later, I created another new layer and drew in the shape of a river by using the Lasso tool – a fairly simple and effective way to draw different



shapes and get some pretty crisp edges as well. When working with the Lasso tool, I used a lot of my P'n'E technique (paint and erase) – I blocked my base color and erased the irrelevant areas. I went back and forth with this until I was happy with the look. Later, I used a color balancing effect to get a more greenish, jungle look (**Fig.02**).

More Details and Variations

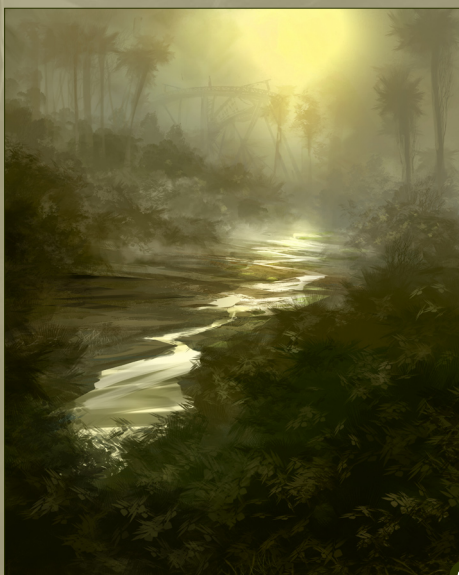
I then added more detail to the palm trees and painted in some single leaves on the bushes by, again, using the customized brush. I realized that the green was too "green", so I used the Color Balance effect to add more yellowy tinges to the mid-tones and highlights (**Fig.03**).

Details and Sun

The colors felt much better after the modifications and so I concentrated more on the detail. By using my customized cloud brush, I painted some fog into the background and the lower areas. With a yellowish soft, round gradient on a new layer, I simulated the foggy sun and defined my main light source as well. Later on, I painted in a huge technical structure with a specially made brush. For the little glowing effect on the river, I used the Burn tool with a soft round brush, set to approximately 10% (lights) (**Fig.04**).

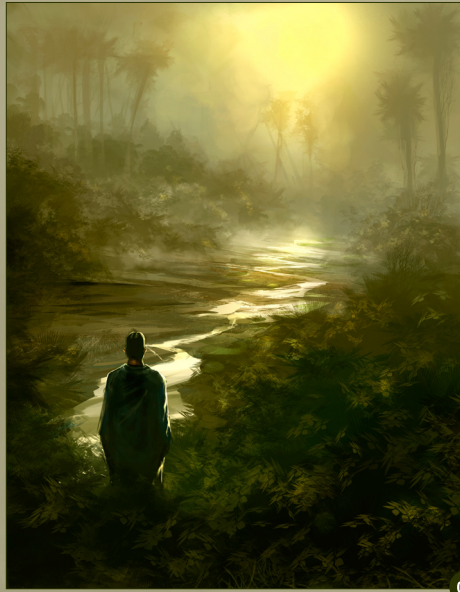
The Young Man

When I was happy with the look of the whole image, I started to paint in some basic shapes





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for the young man. When I start to paint a figure, I keep my strokes pretty loose and rough. I basically use a hard round brush for the blocking and erase certain areas to get the shape of a head, the upper body, etc. A bright yellowish tone, which was picked from the river (Pipette tool), was used to define the frontal lighting for the guy. The highlights are painted with a smaller, hard round brush, set to Opacity and the value blending was done by using the Smudge tool (**Fig.05**).

Reworking the Background

I then worked on the background again. The huge structure in the background didn't fit anymore and so I decided to get rid of it. I used a hard round brush to do a quick paintover. I kept some of the columns from the structure as palm trees (**Fig.06**).

The Robot

For the robot, I used the same technique as described for the young man. It's a simple technique and at the same time, a good way to explore things. I'm a big fan of happy accidents! The only thing I had in mind about the robot was that he should have a more bulky, rounded shape. I thought that this would have a nice shape contrast to the spikier environment and give a stronger connection to the roundish shape of the young fellow (**Fig.07**).

Final Touches

To get a bit more color variety into the image, I created two new layers – both set to Soft Light.



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On those two new layers, I added a soft round gradient with pale blue tones. The pale blue tones, combined with the overall greenish look, are responsible for the gray values on the upper right and left corners. In my opinion, it's really important to have a good understanding of light, and especially of color theory.

Happy with the actual mood and color variety, I went back to the robot. Using a new layer and a hard round brush, I started to define the shape of the robot and added some technical details to it as well. To connect those two important elements more closely, I painted in a floodlight to the head of the robot. With the rim light on the young man and the floodlight from the robot, the viewer will start to connect both elements together. Finally, I painted in some bright leaves for a better contrast to the darker areas by using my leaf brush (**Fig.08**).

Conclusion

I hope this Making Of will give a small insight – or at least a glance – into creating a 2D digital image in Photoshop. I still believe a good understanding of light and color, values and composition, are the key to a successful image. And if you have a good understanding of it, I think the technique will just be the fun part.

Thanks for reading this Making Of and I hope that this will help you to create your own digital images.

Markus Lovadina

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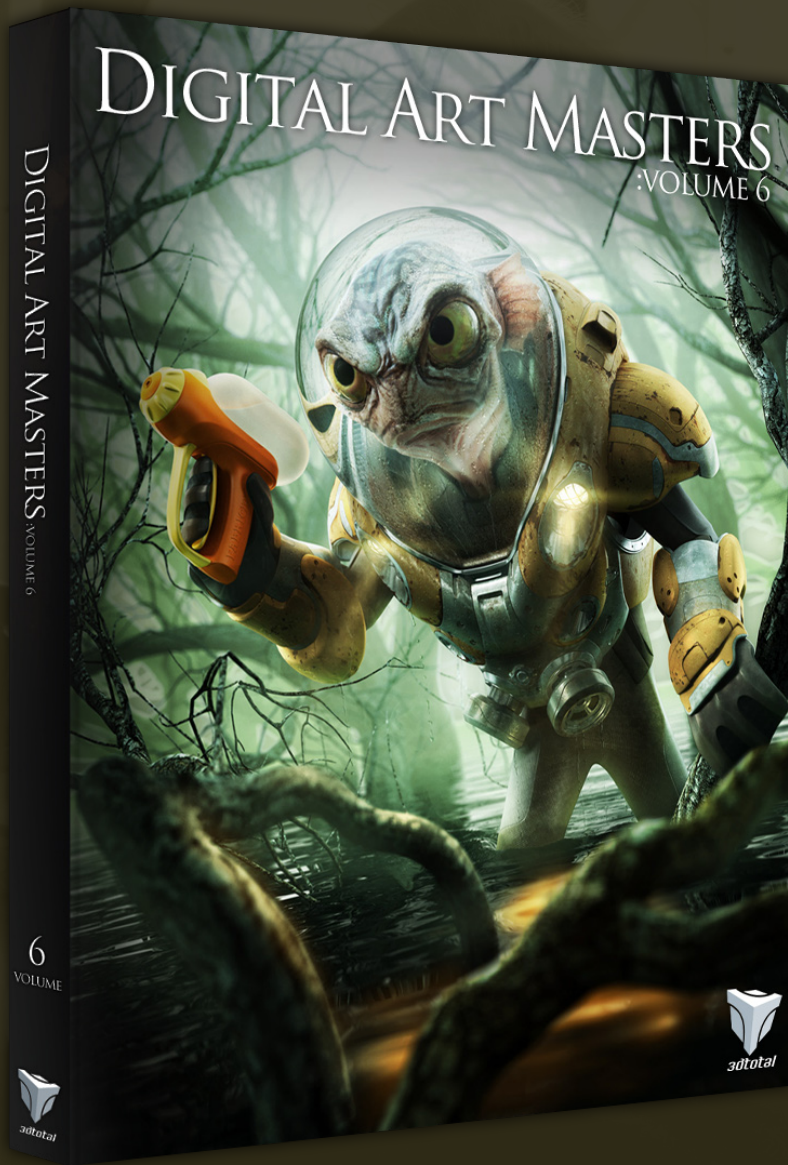
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This month we feature:
"3324 NORTH CALIFORNIA"
BY JASON SEILER





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3324 NORTH CALIFORNIA

BY JASON SEILER

JOB TITLE: Illustrator

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop CS



INTRODUCTION
Many artists can draw a decent likeness of a well-known face, but the challenge is more in capturing not just the likeness but the character of the person as well. For me, capturing this truth, or essence, is the most important factor in considering a portrait successful or not. By observing the unique qualities of the individual, I am able (hopefully) to render a realistic depiction beyond mere likeness. One of my favorite ways to do this is through exaggerated form: the slightest push of an expression or posture in just the right place can tell the viewer quite a bit, as well as make for a more interesting image.



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DOING THUMBNAILS IS A SIMPLE AND QUICK WAY FOR ME TO FIND INTERESTING COMPOSITIONS AND EXPLORE CHARACTER SHAPE AND PROPORTION

I am a traditional painter at heart. I love working with oil, acrylic and watercolor. However, due



to the fast-paced world of publishing, I have taught myself how to paint digitally using a Wacom21" Cintiq. The Cintiq allows me to work naturally, intuitively drawing and painting directly on the LCD display (Fig.01).

MY PAINTING
My technique when painting digitally is very similar to the way I paint with oils or acrylics. I tend to work from dark to light, focusing on values and color harmony. I never use any form

TITLE OF SECTION

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of photo manipulation. The work that I create digitally is hand-drawn and painted. Working digitally has its advantages for both myself and art directors as there is no fuss or time spent scanning and color correcting. It also provides the ability to make changes quickly and easily, and the time it takes me to create a painting digitally versus traditionally is cut in half. The best part is that the final result looks like a traditional painting. The results are so similar that people often confuse my traditional and digital paintings, unable to tell which is which.

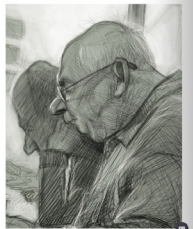
Before beginning a piece I generally create several thumbnail sketches (Fig.02 - 04).

Doing thumbnails is a simple and quick way for me to find interesting compositions and explore character shape and proportion. I use my thumbnail sketches like short-hand notes. I don't share them with art directors, unless they ask, as they can be confusing to anyone but myself. After developing the thumbnails, I quickly move on to the sketch.

By this stage, having the idea and composition set, I begin to take pictures for reference. Using friends and myself as models, I can control the lighting, fidgeting in clothing, poses, hand gestures and expressions (I have used my own face many times for creating expression for



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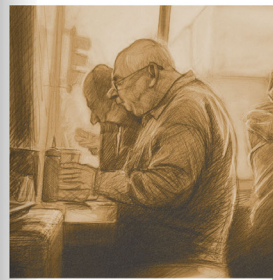


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my subjects; it pays to have a rubber face!). After gathering all the references I need, I do a final sketch (Fig.05 - 06). I love to draw and because I believe that drawing is the foundation for my art, I take special care to get it just right. If the drawing is right, the painting will be right. A strong drawing and composition must come first. I often prefer sketching on a toned background as opposed to white. This helps me lay down my line work and quickly establish light and darks, giving my sketch depth and a life of its own in a very short amount of time.

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Once the sketch is approved, I prepare it for painting. I typically cover my entire sketch with a thin layer of raw umber, using the sketch in the same way an under-painting is utilized in traditional painting (Fig.07). My paintings tend to have a lot of detail, but don't let that fool you. The details are only the final touches. The most important thing is the drawing, and once that meets with my satisfaction I focus on capturing light and establishing strong values.

I DIDN'T WANT TO KEEP IT TIGHT AND WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE PIECE AS A WHOLE, IT LOOKS PHOTO-REALISTIC, BUT WHEN YOU ACTUALLY LOOK CLOSELY YOU CAN SEE THAT THE PAINTING WAS BUILT, ALMOST SCULPTED, ONE BRUSH STROKE AT A TIME

Before I start to paint I create a palette of colors that I will use throughout the painting process. These colors are not pre-mixed to match the exact colors that I will need. Instead, they are colors that I typically use when painting traditionally, like Yellow Ochre,

Cadmium Yellow/Red, Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine Blue, black and white. I will mix these colors together to get what I need for the painting and then I'll click on the color picker to blend or change the color if need be. I can easily add warm or cool, saturate or desaturate. Sometimes I'll begin by blocking in a series of warm grays that I've created, primarily focusing on getting the values how I want them. Once I've established my values, I begin adding light washes of color over my grays. I'll do this on another layer so that I can use the Eraser tool to softly erase certain areas, enabling me to blend my color into the grays seamlessly (Fig.08).

Once I have my colors pretty much blocked in, I'm ready to zoom in closer to work on rendering the details (Fig.09). This is the part that takes the longest because not only do you have to focus on getting the color temperature and values right, you also have to pay attention to anatomy, structure and character alongside soft edges, reflective light and so on. I can easily spend hours and hours rendering, so I have to have a plan so I know how far I want to go with the particular piece that I am working on. For this piece, I didn't want to keep it tight and when you look at the piece as a whole, it looks photorealistic. But when you actually look closely you can see that the painting was built,



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TITLE OF SECTION

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each issue as full of great articles, images,
interviews and tutorials as possible. If you
would like more information on 3DTotal or our
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